the otherside of midnight
by: Sidney Sheldon TO JORJA

who pleasures me in a thousand ways

I

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la a few instances where I felt it would enhance the narrative, I have taken literary license; but any factual errors aremy responsibility alone.

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Except for the mention of various historical world leaders, all characters in this book are fictional

PROLOGUE

Athens 1947

Through the dusty windshield of his car Chief of Police Georgios Skouri watched the office buildings and hotels of downtown Athens collapse in a slow dance of disintegration, one after the other like rows of giant pins in some cosmic bowling afley.

'Twenty minutes," the uniformed policeman at the wheel promised. "No traffic."

Skouri nodded absently and stared at the buildings. It was an illusion that never ceased to fascinate him. The shimmering heat from the pitiless August sun enveloped the buildings in undulating waves that made them seem to be cascading down to the streets in a graceful waterfall of steel and glass.

It was ten minutes past noon, and the streets were almost deserted, but even the few pedestrians abroad were too lethargic to give more than a passing curious glance at the three police cars racing east toward HeJnikon, the airport that lay twenty miles from the center of Athens. Chief Skouri was riding hi the first car. tinder ordinary circumstances, he would have stayed in his comfortable, cool office while his subordinates went wit to work in the blazing noon heat, but these circumstances were far from ordinary and Skouri had a twofold reason for being here personally. First, in the course of this day planes would be arriving carrying VEPs from various parts of the globe, and it was necessary to see that they were welcomed properly and whisked through Customs with a minimum of bother. Second, and more important, the airport would be

crowded with foreign newspaper reporters and newseel cameramen* Chief Skouri was not a fool, and it

had occurred to him as he had shaved that morning
that it would do no harm to his career if he were
shown in newsreels as he took the eminent visitors into
his charge. It was an extraordinary stroke of fate that
had decreed that a worldwide event as sensational as
this one had occurred in his domain, and he would be
stupid not to take advantage of it He had discussed it
in great detail with the two people in the world closest
to him: his wife and his mistress. Anna, a middle-aged,
ugly, bitter woman of peasant stock, had ordered him
to keep away from the airport and stay in the background
so that he could not be blamed if anything went
wrong. Melina, his sweet, beautiful young angel, had
advised him to greet the dignitaries. She agreed with
him that an event like this could catapult him into instant
fame. If Skouri handled this well, at the very least
he would get a raise hi salary and--God willing-- might even be made
Commissioner of Police when the
present Commissioner retired. For the hundredth time
Skouri reflected on the irony that Melina was his wife
and Anna was his mistress, and he wondered again
where he had gone wrong.
Now Skouri turned his thoughts to what lay ahead.
He must make certain that everything went perfectly at
the airport. He was bringing with.him a dozen of his
best men. His main problem, he knew, would be controlling
the press. He had been astonished by the number
of important newspaper and magazine reporters
that had poured into Athens from all over the world.
Skouri himself had been interviewed six times*--each
time in a different language. His answers had been
translated into German, English,, Japanese, French,
Italian and Russian. He had just begun to enjoy .hut
new celebrity when the Commissioner had called to inform
him that he felt it was unwjse for the Chief of ,$0r
lice to comment publicly on a murder trial that had not

yet taken place: Skourt was sure that the Commissioner's
real motivation was jealousy, but he had
prudently decided not to press the issue and had refused
all further interviews. However, the Commissioner
certainly oould not complain if he, Stood, happened
to be at the airport at the center of activity white
the newsred cameras were photographing the arriving
celebrities.
As the car sped down Sygrou Avenue má swung left
at the sea toward Phaleron, Skouri felt a tightening in
tub stomach. They were now only five minutes from the
akport. He mentally checked over the list of celebrities
who would be arriving in Athens before nightfall

Annand Gautier was suffering from airsickness. He had a deep-seated fear of flying that stemmed from an excessive love of himself and his life and that, com» bined with the turbulence usually found off the coast of Greece in summer, had made him violently nauseous. He was a tall, ascetically thin man with scholarly features, a high forehead and a perpetually sardonic mouth. At twenty-two Gaulier had helped create La Nouvelle Vague in France's struggling movie industry and in the years that followed had gone on to even bigger triumphs in the theater. Now acknowledged as one of die world's greatest directors, Gautier nved his role to the hilt. Until the last twenty minutes it had been a most pleasant flight. The stewardesses recognizing him had catered to his needs and had let him know they were available for other activities. Several passengers had come up to him during the flight to say how much they admired his films and plays, but he was most interested hi the pretty English University student who was attending St. Anne's at Oxford. She was writing a thesis on the theater for her master's and had chosen Annand Gautier m her subject Their conversation bad gone well until the girl had brought up the name of NoellePage.

"You used to be her director, didn't you?" she said, "I hope I can get totQ her trial. It's going to be a circus." Gautier found himself gripping the sides of his seat, and the strength of his reaction surprised him. Even after oil these years the memory of Noelle evoked a pain in him that was as sharp as ever. No one had ever touched him as she bad, and no one ever would again. Since Gautier had read of Noelle's arrest three months earlier» he had been able to think of nothing else. He had cabled her and written her, offering to do whatever he could to help, bat he had never received a reply. He had had no intention of attending her trial, but he knew he could not stay away. He told himself that it was because he wanted to see whether she had changed since {hey had lived together. And yet he admitted to himself there was another reason. The theatrical part of him had to be there to view the drama, to watch Noelle's face as the judge told her whether she was to live or die.
The metallic voice of the pilot came over the intercom to announce that they would be landing in Athens is three minutes, and the excitement of the anticipation of seeing Noelle again made Armand Gautier forget Ms airsickness.

E>r. Israel Kate was flying to Athens from cape town, where he was the resident neurosurgeon and chief of

staff at Groote Schuur, the large new hospital that had
just been built. Israel Kate was recognized as one of
die leading neurosnrgeons in the world. Medical journals
were filled with his innovations. His patients included
a prime minister, a president and a king.
He leaned back in the seat of the BOAC plane, a
man of medium height, with a strong, intelligent face,
deep-set brown eyes and long, slender, restless bands.
Dr. Katz was tired, and because of that he began to feel the familiar pain in
a right leg that was no longer

there, a teg amputated six years earlier by a giant with
an ax.
It had been a long day. He had done predawn surgery,
visited half a dozen patients and then walked out
of a Board of Directors* meeting at the hospital in order
to fly to Athens for the trial. His wife, Esther, had
tried to dissuade him.
"There is nothing you pan do for her now, Israel,"
Perhaps she was right, but Noelle Page had once
risked her life to save his and he owed her something.
He thought of Noelle now, and he felt the same indescribable
feeling that he had felt whenever he had
been with her. It was as though the mere memory of him her could dissipate
the years that separated them. It
was romantic fantasy, of course. Nothing could ever
bring those years back. Dr. Israel Katz felt the plane
shudder as the wheels were lowered and it started Us
I descent. He looked out the window and spread out be-I
low him was Cairo, where he would transfer to a TAB
plane to Athens, and Noelle. Was she guilty of murder?
As the plane headed for the runway he thought
about the other terrible murder she had committed in
Paris,

Philippe Sore! stood at the railing of his yacht
watching the harbor of Piraeus moving closer. He had
enjoyed the sea voyage because it was one of the rare
: opportunities he had to escape from his fans. Sorel was
, one of the few sure box-office attractions in the world, I and yet the odds
against his ever rising to stardom had
.' been tremendous. He was not a handsome man. On the
; contrary. He had the face of a boxer who had lost his
'last dozen matches, Ms nose had been broken several 1 times, his hair was
thin and he walked with a slight
: limp. None of these things mattered, for Philippe Sorel
had sex appeal. He was an educated, soft-spoken man,
and the combination of his innate gentleness and
; truck-driver's face and body drove the women frantic

and made men look up to him as a hero. Now as hi» yacht approached the
harbor, Sorel wondered again

what he was doing here. He had postponed a movie that he had wasted to make in order to Attend Noel's trial. He was only too well aware of what an easy target he would be for the press as he sat In the courtroom every day, completely unprotected by his press agents and managers. The reporters were certain to misunderstand his attendance and think that it was a bid to reap publicity from the murder trial of his former mistress. Any way he looked at it, it was going to be an agonizing experience, but Sorel had to see No* eQe again, had to find out if there was some way in which he could help her. As the yacht began to slide into the white-stoned breakwater of the harbor, he thought about the Noelle he had known, lived with and loved, and he came to a conclusion: Noelle was perfectly capable of murder.

As Philippe SorePs yacht was approaching the coast of Greece, the Special Assistant to the President of the United States was hi a Pan American Clipper, one hundred air miles northwest of the Heflenikon Airport.
William Fraser was hi his fifties, a handsome gray-hatred man with a craggy face and an authoritative manner. He was staring at a brief hi his hand, but he had not turned a page or stirred for more than an hour. Fraser had taken a leave of absence to make this journey, even though it had come at a most inconvenient tone, in the midst of a congressional crisis. He knew hew painful the next few weeks were going to be for him, and yet he felt that he had no choice. This was a Journey of vengeance, and the thought filled Fraser with a cold satisfaction. Deliberately Fraser forced his thoughts away from the trial that would begin tomorrow and looked out the window of the plane. Far below he could see «a excursion boat bobbing its way toward Greece, its coast looming in the distance.
* * *

.?'Augusts Lanchon had been seasick and terrified for days. He was seasick because the excursion boat he had boarded in Marseille had been caught in a tat end of a mistral, and he was terrified because
I was afraid that his wife would find out what he was
Auguste Laachon was in his sixties, a fat, bald» man with small stumpy legs and a pockmarked
I «with porcine eyes and thin lips that constantly had
Cigar clamped between them. Lanchon owned
shop in Marseille and he could not afford--or »least that is what he constantly told his wife--to * vacation like rich people. Of course, he remind-^bíinself,
this was not truly a vacation. He had to
^te darling Noelle once again. In the years since
'ad left him, Lanchon had followed her career

''in"the gossip columns, in newspapers and niaga-When
she had starred in her first play, he had
the train all the way to íaris to see her, but No-stupid
secretary had kept them apart. Later he
tied Noelle's mpvies* seeing them again and
and remembering how she had once made love
Yes, this trip would be expensive, but Auguste
knew that it would be worth every sou of it,
:ious Noelle would remember the good times
to have together, and she would turn to him action. He would bribe a judge or
some other one it did not cost too much--^and Noelle would
, and he would set her up in a little apartment
He where she would always be available to him he wanted her. a his wife did
not find out what he was doing.

dty of Athens Frederick Stavros was working the law office on the second
floor of an old run*
building hi the poor Monastiraki section of the
was an intense young man, eager and am-struggling
to make a living from his chosen
Because he could not afford an assistant, he

was forced to do all the tedious background legal research
himself. Ordinarily he hated this part of his
work, but this time he did not mind because he knew
that if he won this case his services would be in such
demand that he would never have to worry again for
the rest of his life. He and Elena could be married and
begin to raise a family. He would move into a suite of
luxurious offices, hire law clerks and join a fashionable
club like the Aihenee Lesky, where one met affluent
potential clients. The metamorphosis had already begun.
Every time Frederick Stavros walked out into the
streets of Athens, he was recognized and stopped by
someone who had seen his picture in the newspaper. In
a few s$ort weeks he had jumped from anonymity to
the attorney who was defending Larry Douglas. In the
privacy of his soul Stavros admitted to himself that he
had the wrong client. He would have preferred to be
defending the glamorous Noel Page instead of a
nonentity like Larry Douglas, but he himself was a
nonentity. It was enough that he, Frederick Stavros,
was a major participant in the most sensational murder
case of the century. If the accused were acquitted,
there would be enough glory for everyone. There was
only one thing that plagued Stavros, and he thought
about it constantly. Both defendants were charged with
the same crime, but another attorney was defending
Noelle Page. If Noelle Page was found innocent, and
Larry Douglas was convicted . . . Stavros shuddered
and tried not to think about it. The reporters kept
asking him whether he thought the defendants were
guilty. He smiled to himself at their naïveté. What did

it matter whether they were guilty or innocent? They were entitled to the best legal defense that money could buy. In his case he admitted that the definition was stretched a bit But in the case of Noelle Page's lawyer ... ah, that was something else again. Napoleon Choas had undertaken her defense, and them was no mote brilliant criminal lawyer in the world. Chotas. bad lost an important ease. As he thought about that, derick Stavros smiled to himself. He would not ; admitted it to anyone, but he was planning to ride > victory on Napoleon Chotas' talent
him
While Frederick Stavros was toiling in his dingy law fsCjffice, Napoleon Chotas was attending a black-tie din-party at a luxurious home in the fashionable '; Kolonaki section of Athens. Chotas was a thin, emaci--looking man with the large, sad eyes of a blood-ad in a corrugated face. He concealed a brilliant, live brain behind a mild, vaguely baffled manner. jjjftow toying with his dessert, Chotas sat, preoccupied, fi$iinking about the trial that would begin tomorrow, of the conversation that evening had centered id the forthcoming trial. The discussion had been ^general one, for the guests were too discreet to ask direct questions. But toward the end of the eve^ as the ouzo and brandy flowed more freely, the : asked, 'Ten us, do you think they are guilty?" >
Chotas replied innocently, "How could they be? One] them is my client." He drew appreciative laughter.
''What is Noelle Page really Kke?"
Chotas hesitated. "She's a most unusual woman," replied carefully. "She's beautiful and talented--" > his surprise he found that he Was suddenly rehic-it to discuss her. Besides, there was no way one Ifoould capture Noelle with words. Until a few months he had only been dimly aware of her as a glamor-figure flitting through the gossip columns and arning the covers of movie magazines. He had new* f& laid eyes ott her, and if he had thought of her at all, had been with the kind of indifferent contempt he toward all actresses. All body and no brain. But, how wrong he had been! Since meeting Noelle had fallen hopelessly in love with her. Because of le Page he had broken his cardinal rule: never get emotionally involved with a client Chotas re numbered vividly the afternoon he had been approached to undertake her defense. He had been in the midst of packing for a three-week vacation trip that he and his mistress were going to make to Paris and London. Nothing, he had believed, could have stopped him from making that journey. But it had only taken two words. In his mind's eye he saw his butler walk into the bedroom, hand him him telephone and say, "Constantin Demiris."

The island was inaccessible except by helicopter and yacht, and both the airfield and the private harbor were patrolled twenty-four hours a day by armed guards with trained German shepherds. The island was Constantin Demiris* private domain, and no one intruded without an invitation. Over the years its visitors had included kings and queens, presidents and ex-presidents, movie stats, opera singers and famous writers and painters. They had an come away awed. Constantin Demiris was the third wealthiest, and one of the most powerful men in the world, and he had taste and style and knew how to spend his money to create beauty.
Demiris sat hi his richly paneled library now, relaxed in a deep armchair, smoking one of the flat-shaped Egyptian cigarettes especially blended for him, thinking about the trial that would begin in the morning.
The press had been trying to get to him for months, but he had simply made himself unavailable.
It was enough that his mistress was going to be tried for murder, enough that his name would be dragged into the case, even indirectly. He refused to add to the furor by granting any interviews. He wondered what Noelle was feeling now, at this moment, in her cell in the Nikodemous Street Prison. Was she asleep? Awake? Filled with panic at the ordeal that lay before her? He thought of his last conversation with Napoleon Chotas. He trusted Chotas and knew that the lawyer would not fail him. Demiris had impressed upon the ney that it did not matter to him whether Noelle ; innocent or guilty. Chotas was to see to it that he every penny of the stupendous fee that Con-Demiris was paying him to defend her. No, he ,no reason to worry. The trial would go well. Be-Constantin Demiris was a man who never for-anything, he remembered that Catherine Douglas' rite flowers were Triantafylias, the beautiful roses ? Greece. He reached forward and picked up a note from his desk. He made a notation. Triantafylias. ine Douglas. ||{t was the least he could do for her.

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Book One

CATHERINE
Chicago: 1919-1939

a large city has a distinctive image, a personality rgives it its own special cachet. Chicago in the Ts was a restless, dynamic giant, crude and without

aers, one booted foot stíll in th« ruthless era of the
ans who helped give birth to it: William B. Ogden
John Wentworth, Cyrus McCormick and George
' Pullman. It was a kingdom that belonged to the
lip Armours and Gustavus Swifts and Marshall
It was the domain of cool professional gang-i
like Hymie Weiss and Scarf ace Al Capone. one of Catherine Alexander's earliest memories was [íí&t father taking her into a bar with a sawdust-cov-floor
and swinging her up to the dizzyingly high
He ordered an enormous glass of beer for him-and
a Green River for her. She was five years old,
she remembered how proud her father was as
agers crowded around to admire her. All the men
bred drinks and her father paid for them. She re-how
she had kept pressing her body against his
to make sure he was still there. He had only re-aed
to town the night before, and Catherine knew
he would soon leave again. He was a traveling
nan, and he had explained to her that his work
him to distant cities and he had to be away from
and her mother for months at a time so that he
I'll bring back nice presents. Catherine had desper-' tried to make a deal with him. If he would stay
her, she would give up the presents. Her father
I laughed and said what a precocious child she was
and then had left town, and it was six months before
she saw him again. During those early years her
mother whom she saw every day seemed a vague,
shapeless personality, while her father, whom she saw
only on brief occasions, was vivid and wonderfully
dear. Catherine thought of him as a handsome, laughing
man, fun-of sparkling humor and warm, generous
gestures. The occasions when he came home were like
holidays, full of treats and presents and surprises.
When Catherine was seven, her father was fired
from his job, and their life took on a new pattern. They
left Chicago and moved to Gary, Indiana, where he
went to work as a salesman hi a jewelry store. Catherine
was enrolled in her first school. She had a wary,
arms-length relationship with the other children and
was terrified of her teachers, who misinterpreted her
lonely standoffishness as conceit Her father came
home to dinner every night, and for the first time in her
life Catherine felt that they were a real family, like
other families. On Sunday die three of them would go
to Miller Beach and rent horses and ride for an hour
or two along the sand dunes. Catherine enjoyed living
in Gary, but six months after they moved there, her
father lost his job again and they moved to Harvey, *
suburb of Chicago. School was already in session, and
Catherine was the new ghi, shut out from the friend*
ships that had already been formed. She became

known as a loner. The children, secure in the safety
of their own groups, would come up to the gangly newcomer
and ridicule her cruelly.
During the next few years Catherine donned «air aimer
of indifference, which she wore as a shield against
the attacks of the other children. When the armor was
pierced, she struck back with a trenchant, caustic wit.
Her intention was to alienate her tormentors so that
they would leave her atone, but it had an unexpectedly
different effect She worked on the school paper, and in
her first review about a musical that her classmates had
staged, she wrote, "Tommy Belden had a trumpet solo
act, but he blew ft." The fine was widely
sad--surprise of surprises--Tommy Belden
to her in the hall the next day and told him that he thought it was funny.
the students were assigned Captain Horn-to
read. Catherine hated it. Her,book
.consisted of one sentience: "His barque was
his bight," and her teacher, who was a
1 sailor, gave her an "A." Her classmates began
her remarks and in a short time she was him the school wit.
year Catherine turned fourteen and her body
beginning to show the promise Of a ripening
She would examine herself In the mirror for him on end, brooding about how to
change the disas-saw
reflected. Inside she was Myrna Loy, driv-mad
with her beauty, but her mirror---which
her bitter enemy--showed hopelessly tangled
: hah-that
was impossible to manage, solemn gray
a mouth that seemed to grow wider by the hour
a nose that was slightly turned up. Maybe she wasn't really ugly, she told
herself cautiously, but on on other hand no one was going to knock down doors
her up as a movie star. Sucking hi her cheeks
squinting her eyes sexily she tried to visualize her-as
a model. It was depressing. She struck another
e. Eyes open wide, expression eager, a big friendly
, No use. She wasn't the All-American type either,
wasn't anything. Her body was going to be all
lit, she dourly supposed, but nothing special And
of course, was what she wanted more than any-in
the world: to be something special, to be
aebody, to be Remembered, and never, never, to, never, to die.
The summer she was fifteen, Catherine came across {Science and Health by Mary
Baker Eddy and for the
next two weeks she spent an hour a day before her
: mirror, willing her reflection to become beautiful. At on the end of that
time the only change she could detect
was a new patch of acne on her chin and a pimple on
her forehead. She gave up sweets, Mary Baker Eddy
aúd looking in the mirror.
Catherine and her family had'moved back to Chicago
and settled in a small, dreary apartment On the

north side, in Rogers Park, where the rent was cheap. The country was moving deeper into an economic depression. Catherine's father was working less and drinking more, and he and her mother were constantly yelling at each other in a never-ending series of recriminations that drove Catherine out of the house.
She would go down 4o the beach half a dozen blocks away and walk along the shore, letting the brisk wind give wings to bet thin body. She spent long hours staring at the restless gray lake, filled with some desperate longing to which she could not put a name. She wanted something so much that at times it would engulf her in a sudden wave of unbearable pain,
«a Catherine had discovered Thomas Wolfe, and his books, were like >a mirror image of the bittersweet nostalgia that filled her, but it was a nostalgia for a future .that had.not happened yet, as though somewhere, sometime, she had lived a wonderful life and was restless to live it again» She had begun to have her periods, and while she was physically changing into a woman, she' knew that her needs, her longings, this aching-wanting was not physical and had nothing to do with sex. & was a fierce and urgent longing to be recognized, to lift herself above the billions of people who teemed the earth, so everyone would know who she was, so when she walked by, they would say, There goes Catherine Alexander, the great--" The great what? There was the problem. She did not know what
she wanted, only that she ached desperately for it. On Saturday afternoons whenever she had enough money, she would go to the State and Lake Theater or to the McVtekers or'the Chicago, and see movies. She would completely lose herself in the wonderful, sophisticated '. Gary Grant and Jean Arthur, laugh with Wai-and Marie Dressier and agonize over Bette romantic disasters. She felt closer to Irene ft than to her mother.
was in her senior year at Sean High and her archenemy, the mirror, had finally be» iher friend. The girl in the mirror had a lively, in* : face. Her hair was raven black and her skin a ay white. Her features were regular and fine, generous, sensitive mouth and intelligent gray had a good figure with firm, well-developed gently curving hips and shapely legs. There a air of aloofness about her image, a hauteur that
did not feel, as though her reflection pos-"» characteristic that she did not. She supposed part of the protective armor she had worn rearly school days.

sion had clutched the nation in a tighter vise, and Catherine's father was incessantly

; big deals that never seemed to materialize,
-constantly spinning dreams, inventing things
going to bring in millions of dollars. hid
P net of jacks that fitted above the wheels of an
and could be lowered by the touch of a
the dashboard. None of the automobile
was interested. He worked out a con
rotating electric sign to carry advertisements
There was a brief flurry of optimistic
I then the idea faded away.
money from his younger brother»
iiiOmaha to outfit a shoe-repair truck to travel
neighborhood. He spent hours discussing
with Catherine and her mother. "It can't a Explained. "Imagine having the shoemaker
' your door! No one's ever done it before. I
»Shoe-mobile out now, right? If it only makes
a day, that's a hundred and twenty dol- lars a week. Two trucks will bring in two hundred and
forty a week. Within a year I'll have twenty trucks.
That's two thousand four hundred dollars a week. A
hundred and twenty-five thousand a year. And that's
only the beginning. . . ." Two months later the shoemaker
and the truck disappeared, and that was the end
of another dream.
Catherine had hoped to be able to go to Northwestern
University. She was the top scholar hi her
class, but even on a scholarship college would be difficult
to manage, and the day was coming, Catherine
knew, when she would have to quit school and go to
work full time. She would get a job as a secretary, but
she was determined that, she would never surrender the
dream, that was going to give such rich, wonderful
meaning to her life; and the fact that she did not know
what either the dream or the meaning was made it all
the more unbearably sad and futile. She told herself
that she was -probably going through adolescence.
Whatever it was, it was hell. Kids are too young to
have to go through adolescence, she thought bitterly.
There were two boys who thought they were in love
witti Catherine. One-was Tony Korman who was going
to join his father's law firm one day and who was a
foot shorter than Catherine. He had pasty skin and
myopic watery eyes that adored her. The other was
Dean McDermott, who was fat and shy and wanted to
be a dentist. Then of course, there was Ron Peterson,
but he was hi a category by himself. Ron was Senn
High's football star, and everybody said he was a cinch
to go to college on an athletic scholarship. He was tall
and broad-shouldered, had the looks ofb matinee idol
and was easily the most popular boy in school
The only thing that kept Catherine from instantly
getting engaged to Ron was the fact that he was not

aware she was alive. Every time she passed him hi the school corridor, her heart would begin to pound wildly. She would think up something clever and provocative
»

say so he would ask her for a date. But when she him, her tongue would stiffen, and they I'll pass each other hi silence. Like the Queen Mary I a garbage scow, Catherine thought hopelessly.

The financial problem was becoming acute. The rent three months overdue, and the only reason they not been evicted was that the landlady was cap-rated by Catherine's father and his grandiose plans inventions. Listening to him, Catherine was fitted a poignant sadness. He was still his cheerful, op-listic self, but she could see behind the frayed The marvelous, careless charm' that had always ven a patina of gaiety to everything he did had erod-He reminded Catherine of a small boy in a mid-^-aged man's body spinning tales of the glorious fo> to hide the shabby failures of the past More than she had seen him give a dinner party for a dozen pie at Henrici's and then cheerfully take one of his aside and borrow enough to cover the check a lavish tip, of course. Always lavish, for he had reputation to maintain. But in spftp of all these lings and in spite of the fact that Catherine knew that had been a casual and indifferent father to her, she ved this man. She loved his enthusiasm and smiling rgy in a world of frowning, sullen people. This was ; gift, and he had always been generous with it
In the end, Catherine thought, he was better off with wonderful dreams that would never materialize, him her mother who was afraid to dream.
In April Catherine's mother died of a heart attack. It Catherine's first confrontation with death. Friends ad neighbors filled the little apartment, offering their ndolences, with the false, whispered pieties that trag-' invokes.
Death had diminished Catherine's mother to a tiny iveled figure without juices or vitality, or perhaps had done that to her, Catherine thought She tried to recall memories that site and her mother had shared, laughter that they had had together, moments when their hearts had touched; but it was Catherine's father who kept leaping into her mind, smiling and eager and gay. It was as though her mother's life was a pale shadow that retreated before the sunlight of memory.
Catherine stared at the waxen figure of her mother in her casket, dressed in a simple black dress with a white collar, and thought what a wasted life it had been.
What had it all been for? The feelings Catherine had had years ago came over her again, the determination

to be somebody, leave a mark on the world, so she would not end up in an anonymous grave with the world neither knowing nor caring that Catherine Alexander had ever lived and died and been returned to the earth.

Catherine's Uncle Ralph and his wife, Pauline, flew in from Omaha for the funeral. Ralph was ten years younger than Catherine's father and totally unlike his brother. He was in the vitamin mail-order business and very successful. He was a large, square man, square shoulders, square jaw, square chin, and, Catherine was sure, a square mind. His wife was a bird of a woman, all flutter and twitter. They were decent enough people, and Catherine knew that her uncle had loaned a great deal of money to his brother, but Catherine felt that she had nothing in common with them. Like Catherine's mother, they were people without dreams.

After the funeral, Uncle Ralph said that he wanted to talk to Catherine and her father. They sat in the tiny living room of the apartment, Pauline flitting about with trays of coffee and cookies.

"I know things have been pretty rough for you financially," Uncle Ralph said to his brother. "You're too much of a dreamer, always were. But you're my brother. I can't let you sink. Pauline and I talked it over. I want you to come to work for me."

"In Omaha?"

"You'll make a good, steady living and you and

 ine can live with us. We have a big house."

tie's heart sank. Omaha! It was the end of all
._... him.

; me think it over," her father was saying,

/ell be catching the six o'clock tram," Uncle I'll replied. "Let me know before we leave."

en Catherine and her father were alone, he need, "Omaha! Ill bet the place doesn't even have a barber shop."

Catherine knew that the act he was putting on
>r her benefit. Decent barber shop or no, he had
| choice. Life had finally trapped him. She wondered
; it would do to his spirit to have to settle down to
dull job with regular hours. He would be like
red wild bird beating his wings against his cage,
of captivity. As for herself, she would have to
: about going to Northwestern University. She had
for a scholarship but had heard nothing. That
noon her father telephoned his brother to say that
} would take the job.

iThe next morning Catherine went to see the print»-to tell bun that she was going to transfer to a in Omaha. He was standing behind his desk and Me she could speak, he said, "Congratulations, ierine, you've just won a full scholarship to Northern University."

Catherine and her father discussed it thoroughly that lit, and hi the end it was decided that he would to Omaha and Catherine would go to North-and live in one Of the dormitories on the cam-And so, ten days later, Catherine took her father to the La Salle Street station to see him off. She filled with a deep sense of loneliness at his depar-a sadness at saying good-bye to the person she the most; and yet at the same tune she was eager the tram to leave, filled with a delicious excitement the thought that she would -be free, living her own for the first time. She stood on the platform the face of her father pressing against the train window for a last look; a shabbily handsome man who still truly believed that one day he would own the world.

On the way back from the station Catherine remembered something and laughed aloud. To take him to Omaha, to a desperately needed job, her father had booked a Drawing Room.

Matriculation day at Northwestern was filled with an almost unbearable excitement. For Catherine it held a special significance that she could not put into words: It was the key that would unlock the door to all the dreams and nameless ambitions that had burned so fiercely within her for so long. She looked around the huge assembly hall where hundreds of students were lined up to register, and she thought: Someday you'll alt know who 1 am. You'll say, "I went to school with Catherine Alexander." She signed up for the maximum number of allowed courses and was assigned to a dormitory. That same morning she found a job working afternoons as a cashier at the Roost, a popular sandwich and malt shop across from the campus. Her salary was fifteen dollars a week, and while it would not afford her any luxuries, it would take care of her school books and basic necessities.

By the middle of her sophomore year Catherine decided that she was probably the only virgin on the entire campus. During the years she was growing up, she had overheard random snatches of conversations as her elders discussed sex. It sounded wonderful, and her strongest fear was that it would be gone by the time she was old enough to enjoy it. Now it looked as though she had been right At least as far as she was concerned. Sex seemed to be the single topic of conversation at school It was discussed in the dormitories, in classrooms, in the washrooms and at the Roost.

Catherine was shocked by the frankness of the conversations.

"Jerry is unbelievable. He's like King Kong."

|f Are you talking about his cock or his brain?"
le doesn't need a brain, honey. I came six tunes a night."
you ever gone out with Ernie Bobbins? He's
1, but he's mighty."
l"Alex asked me for a date tonight What's the
e?"
*The dope is Alex. Save yourself the trouble. He followed me out to the beach last week. He pulled down
pants and started to grope me, and I started to him him, but I couldn't find it." Laughter.
'Catherine thought the conversations were vulgar and yet and she tried not to miss a word. It was an
rise in masochism. As the girls described their sex-exploits,
Catherine visualized herself in bed with a him, having him make wild and frantic love to her. She I'll feel a physical ache in her groin and press her hard against her thighs, trying to hurt herself, to
her mind off the other pain. My God, she thought, going to die a virgin. The only nineteen-year-old him at Northwestern. Northwestern, hett, maybe
the United States! The Virgin Catherine. The
ch will make me a Saint and they'll light candles
me once a year. What's the matter with me? she
light. /'// tell you, she answered herself. Nobody's
sked you and it takes two to play. I mean, if you want
> do it right, it takes two to play. The name that most frequently cropped up in the
rls' sexual conversations was Ron Peterson. He had
rolled at Northwestern on an athletic scholarship
ad was as popular here as he had been at Sena High
dool. He had been elected freshman class president,
derine saw him in her Latin class the day the term
He was even better looking than he had been in
school, his body had filled out, and his face had
: on a rugged devil-may-care maturity. After class,
|jhe walked toward her, and her heart began to pound. Catherine Alexander!
Hello, Ron.
Are you in this class?
Yes.
What a break for me.
Why?
Why? Because I don't know anything about Latin
and you're a genius. We're going to make beautiful
music. Are you doing anything tonight?
Nothing special. Do you want to study together?
Let's go to the beach where we can be alone. We
can study any time.

He was staring at her.
"Hey!... er--?" trying to think of her name.
She swallowed, trying desperately to remember, herself.
"Catherine," she said quickly. "Catherine Alexander."
"Yeah. How about this place! If him terrific, isn't it?"
She tried to put eagerness in her voice to please him,

agree with him, woo him. "Oh yes," she gushed, "it's
the most--"
He was looking at a stunning blond girl wailing at
the door for him. "See you," he said, and moved away
to join the girl.
And that was the end of the Cinderella and Prince
Charming story, she thought. They Uved happily ever
after, he in his harem and she in a windswept cave in
Tibet. v
From tune to tune Catherine would see Ron walking
along the campus, always with a different girl and
sometimes.two or three. My God, doesn't he ever get
tired? -she wondered. She still had visions that one day
he would come to her for help hi Latin, but he never
spoke to her again.
At night lying in her lonely bed, Catherine would
think about all the other girls making love to their
boyfriends, and the boy who would always come to her
was Ron Peterson. In her mind he would undress her
and then she would slowly undress him, the way they
always did it in romantic novels, taking off his shirt and
running her fingers over his chest, then undoing
| trousers and pulling down his shorts. He would pick
up and carry her toward the bed. At that point erine's comic sense would get the better of her and him would sprain his back and fall to the floor, moaning groaning with pain. Idiot, she told herself, you
ft even do It right in your fantasies. Maybe she go enter a nunnery. She wondered if nuns had sex fantasies and if it was a sin for them to masturbate, him wondered if priests ever had sexual intercourse.
tie was sitting in a cool, tree-shaded courtyard in a
ely old abbey outside Rome, trailing her fingers in
sun-warmed water of an ancient fish pond. The him opened, and a tall priest entered the courtyard. He
a wide-brimmed hat and a long black cassock and
(looked exactly like Ron Peterson. lAh, scusi, signorina, he murmured, I did not know I
la visitor.
| Catherine quickly sprang to her feet, / shouldn't be she apologized. It was just so beautiful I had to
there and drink it in.
You are most welcome. He moved toward her, his
; dark and blazing. Mia cam. . . I lied to you. ', Lied to me?
Yes. His eyes were boring into hers. / knew you
'. here because I followed you. |; She felt a thrill go through her. But--but you are a

Bella signorina, I am a man first and a priest after-rd. He lurched forward to take her in his arms, and him stumbled on the hem of his cassock and fell into the him pond.
Shit!

Ron Peterson came into the Roost every day after
"hool and would take a seat at the booth in the far a. The booth would

quickly fill up with Ms friends
become the center of boisterous conversation.
: stood behind the counter near the cash regis 36

ter and when Ron entered, he would give her a pleasant,
absent nod and move on. He never addressed her
by name. He's forgotten tt, Catherine mused.
But each day when he walked in, she gave him a big
smile and waited for him to say hello, ask her for a
date, a glass of water, her virginity, anything. She
might as well have been a piece of furniture. Examining
the girls in the room with complete objectivity she
decided she was prettier than all but one girl, the fantastic
looking Jean-Anne, the Southern blonde with
whom Ron was most often seen, and she was certainly
brighter than all of them put together. What in God's
name then was wrong with her? Why was it that not
one single boy asked her for a date? She learned the
answer the next day.
She was hurrying south along the campus headed for
the Roost when she saw Jean-Anne and a brunette
whom she did not know, walking across the green lawn
toward her. '
, "Well, it's Miss Big Brain," Jean-Anne said.
And Miss Big Boobs, Catherine thought enviously.
Aloud she said, 'That was a murderous Lit quiz,
wasn't it?"
"Don't be condescending," Jean-Anne > said coldly.
"You know enough to teach the Lit course. And that's
not all you could teach us, is it, honey?"
. Something in her tone made Catherine's face begin
to redden.
"I--I don't understand."
/'Leave her alone," the brunette said.
"Why should I?" Jean-Anne asked. "Who the hell
does she think she is?" She turned to Catherine. "Do
you want to know what everyone says about you?"
God, no. "Yes."
"You're a lesbo."
, Catherine stared at her, unbelievingly. "I'm a what?"
"A lesbian, baby. You're not fooling anybody with
that holier-than-thou act."
"Th--that's ridiculous," Catherine stammered.
did you really think you could fool people?" Jean-ae
asked. "You're doing everything but carrying a
>»

3utl--Ï never--;"
| "The boys get it up for you, but yon never let them
tit in."
one "Really--" Catherine blurted. \ "Fuck off," Jean-Anne said. "You're not

our type."
|.They walked away, leaving her standing there,
bly staring after them.
That night, Catherine lay in bed, unable to sleep. low old are you, Miss Alexander?
Nineteen,
'.Have you ever had sexual intercourse with a man? on Never.
',Do you like men? ; Doesn't everyone?
a Have you ever wanted to make love to a woman? «.Catherine thought about it long and hard. She had
, crushes on other girls, on women teachers but that
been part of growing up. Now she thought about
; love to a woman, their bodies intertwining, her
on another woman's lips, her body being caressed
soft, feminine hands. She shuddered. Nol Aloud,
said, "I'm normal" But if she was normal, why
she lying here like this? Why wasn't she out some- getting laid like everyone else in the world? Per
she was frigid. She might need some kind of oper.
A lobotomy, probably.
When the Eastern sky began to lighten outside the
litory window, Catherine's eyes were still open,
; she had made a decision. She was going to lose hex
And the lucky man was going to be every
n's bedside companion, Ron Peterson.
Noelle
MmeiHe-Paric 1919-1939

She was born ft Royal Princess.
Her earliest memories were of a white bassinet covered
with a lace canopy, decorated with pink ribbons
and filled with soft stuffed animals and beautiful dolls
and golden rattles. She quickly learned that if she
Opened her mouth and let out a cry, someone would
hurry to hold and comfort her. When she was six
months old her father would take her out in the garden
In her perambulator and let her touch the flowers and
he would say, "They're lovely, Princess, but you're
more beautiful than any of them."
At home she enjoyed it when her father lifted her up
hi his strong arms and carried her to a window where
she could look out and see the roofs of the high buildings,
and he would say, "That's your Kingdom out
there, Princess." He would point to the tall masts of
ships bobbing at anchor in the bay. "Do you see those
big ships? One day they'll be yours to command."
Visitors would come to the castle to see her, but
only a few special ones were permitted to hold her.
The others would stare down at her as she lay in her
crib and would exclaim over her unbelievably delicate
features* and her lovely blond hair, her soft honey-colored
skin, and her father would proudly say, "A
stranger could tell she is a Princess!" And he would

lean over her crib and whisper, "Someday a beautiful
Prince will come and sweep you off your feet" And he
would gently tuck the warm pink blanket around her
and she would daft off to a contented deep. Her whole
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. was a roseate dream of ships, tall masts and cas,
and it was not until she was five years old that she
stood that she was the daughter of a Marseille
longer, and that the castles she saw from the win-of
her tiny attic room were the warehouses around
stinking fish market where her father worked, and
; her navy was the fleet of old fishing ships that set I from Marseille every morning before dawn and re-jed
in the early afternoon to vomit their smelly
him into the waterfront docks. a This was the kingdom of Noelle Page.
jïThe friends of Noelle's father used to warn him
what he was doing. "You mustn't put fancy
in her head, Jacques. She'll think she's better him everybody else." And
their prophecies came true.
(On the surface Marseille is a city of violence, the
crowded with hungering sailors with money to
and clever predators to relieve them of it. But
the rest of the French, the people of Marseille
a sense of solidarity that comes from a common
for survival, .for the lifeblood of the town
from the sea, and the fishermen of Marseille be
to the family of fishermen all over the world. They
alike in the storms and the calm days, the sudden
sasters and the bountiful harvests,
v So it was that Jacques Page's neighbors rejoiced at
' a good fortune in having such-an incredible daughter,
too recognized the miracle of how, out of the
of the dirty, ribald city, a true Princess had been
iwned.
Noelle's parents could not get over the wonder of
daughter's exquisite beauty. Noelle's mother was
heavyset, coarse-featured peasant woman with sag-breasts
and thick thighs and hips. Noelle's father
squat, with broad shoulders and the small suspi-eyes
of a Breton. His hair was the color of the
et sand along the beaches of Normandy. In the begin
it had seemed to him that nature had made a mis-that
this exquisite blond fairy creature could sot
really belong to him and Ms wife, ana that as Noelle
grew older she, would turn into an ordinary, plain-looking
girl like all the other daughters of his friends. 'But
the miracle continued to grow and flourish, and Noelle
became more beautiful each day.
Noelle's mother was less surprised than her husband
by the appearance of a golden-haired beauty in the
family. Nine months before Noelle had been born, Noelle's

mother had met a strapping Norwegian sailor just
off a freighter. He was a giant Viking god with blond
hair and a warm, seductive grin. While Jacques was at
work, the sartor had spent a busy quarter of an hour in
her bed in their tiny apartment.

Noelle's mother had been filled with fear when she
saw how blond and beautiful her baby was. She walked
around in dread, waiting for the moment that her husband
would point an accusing finger at her and demand
to know the identity of the real father. But, incredibly,
some ego-hunger in him made him accept the
child as his own. >

"She must be a throwback to some Scandinavian
blood in my family," he would boast to his friends,
"but you can see that she has my features."

His wife would listen, nodding agreement, and think
what fools men were.

Noelle loved being with her father. She adored his
clumsy playfulness and the strange, interesting smells
that clung to him, and at the same time she was terrified
by the fierceness of him. She would watch wide-eyed
as he yelled at her mother and slapped her hard
across the face, his neck corded with anger. Her
mother would scream out in pain, but there was something
beyond pain in her cries, something animal and
sexual and Noelle would feel pangs of jealousy and
wish she were in her mother's place.

But her father was always gentle with Noelle. He
liked to take her down to the docks and show her off 10
the rough, crude men with whom he worked. She was
known up and down the docks as The Princes» and she
I of this, as much for her father's sake as for

wanted to please her father, and because he
to eat, Noelle began cooking for him, preparing
hfavorite dishes, gradually displacing her mother in a kitchen.
seventeen the promise of Noelle's early beauty him been more than fulfilledi
She had matured into an
ite woman. She had fine, delicate features, eyes a
, violet color and soft ash-blond hair. Her skin was
and golden as though she had been dipped in
Her figure was stunning, with generous, firm, yet breasts, a small waist,
rounded hips and long
áy legs, with delicate ankles. Her voice was disive,
soft and mellifluous. There was a strong,
aldering sensuality about Noelle, but that was not
magic. Her magic lay in the fact that beneath the
suality seemed to lie an untouched island of inno-ace,
and the combination was irresistible. She could
walk down the streets without receiving proposi-from
passersby. They were not the casual offers
?at the prostitutes of Marseille received as their daily
arrency, for even the most obtuse men perceived

aething special in Noelle, something that they had never seen before and perhaps would never see again,
each was willing to pay as much as he could afford him try to make it a part of himself, however briefly.
Noelle's father was conscious of her beauty, too. In
Jacques Page thought of little else. He was aware
the interest that Noelle aroused in men. Even
tough neither he nor his wife ever discussed sex with Noelle, he was certain she still had her virginity, *
aman's little capital. His shrewd peasant mind gave
Qg and serious thought to how he could best capital-on
the windfall that nature had unexpectedly bestowed
upon him. His mission was to see that his
| daughter's beauty paid off as handsomely as possible
Ilor Noelle and for him. After all, he had «red her, fed
liter, clothed her, educated her--she owed him every thing. And now it was time for him to be repaid. If he
could set her up as some rich man's mistress, it would
be food for her, and he would be able to live the life of
ease to which he was entitled. Each day it was getting
more and more difficult for an honest man to make a
living. The shadow of war had began to spread across
Europe. The Nazis had marched into Austria hi a lightning
coup that had left Europe stunned. A few months
later the Nazis had taken over the Sudeten area and
then marched into Slovakia. In spite of Hitler's assurances
that he was not interested in further conquest,
the feeling persisted that there was going to be a major
conflict.
The impact of events was felt sharply in France.
There were shortages in the stores and markets, as the
government began to gear for a massive defense effort
Soon, Jacques feared, they would even stop the fishing
and then where would he be? No, the answer to his
problem was in finding a suitable lover for his daughter.
The trouble was that he knew no wealthy-men. All
his friends were piss-poor like himself, and he had no
intention of letting any man near her who could not
pay his price.
The answer to Jacques Page's dilemma was inadvertently
supplied by Noelle herself. In recent months Noelle
had become increasingly restless. She did well in
her classes, but,school had begun to bore her. She told
her father that she wanted to get a job. He studied her
silently, shrewdly weighing the possibilities.
«What kind of job?" he asked.
"I don't know," Noelle replied. "I might be able to
work as a model, papa."
It was as simple as that.
Every afternoon for the next week Jacques Pag*
went home after work, carefully bathed to get the smell
of fish out of his hands and hair, dressed in his good
suit and went down to the Qanebiêre, the main street

that led from the old harbor of the city to the richer
districts. He walked up and down the street exploring
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lie dress salons, a clumsy peasant in a world of silk
lace, but he neither knew nor cared that he was
E place. He had but one objective and he found it
he reached the Bon Marché. It was the finest
shop in Marseille, but that was not why he chose
chose it because it was owned by Monsieur Au-Lanchon.
Lanchon was in his fifties, an ugly
-headed man with small stumpy legs and a greedy,
ing mouth. His wife, a tiny woman with the
He of a finely honed hatchet, worked in the fitting
loudly supervising the tailors. Jacques Page took
>ok at Monsieur Lanchon and his wife and knew a he had found the solution to his problem,
anchon watched with distaste as the shabbily
stranger entered the door of his shop. Lanchon
1 rudely, "Yes? What can I do for you?"
Jacques Page winked, poked a thick finger in Latin's
chest and smirked, "It is what I can do for you,

nsieur. I am going to let my daughter work for
»

fjAuguste Lanchon stared at the lout standing before
an expression of incredulity on his face.
him are going to let--"
"She will be here tomorrow, nine o'clock." 1 do not--"
I* Jacques Page had left. A few minutes later, Augusts
achon had completely dismissed the incident from
mind. At nine o'clock the next morning, Lanchon
aked up and saw Jacques Page entering the shop. He
about to tell his manager to throw the man out,
lien behind him he saw NoeDe. They were walking
vard him, the father and his unbelievably beautiful
ughter, and the old man was grinning, "Here she is,
iy to go to work."
Auguste Lanchon stared at the girl and licked his

"Good morning, Monsieur," Noelle smiled. "My faer
told me that you had a job tot me."

«a'

Auguste Lanchon nodded Ms head, unable to trust
his voice.
"Yes, I--I think we could arrange something," he
managed to stammer. He studied her face and figure

and could not believe what he saw. He could already imagine what that naked young body would fed like under him.

Jacques Page was saying, "Well, I will leave you two to get acquainted," and he gave Lanchon a hearty whack on the shoulder and a wink that had a dozen different significances, none of them leaving any doubt in Lanchon's mind about his intentions.

For the first few weeks Noelle felt that she had been transported to another world. The women who came to the shop were dressed hi beautiful clothes and had lovely manners, and the men who accompanied them were a far cry from the crude, boisterous fishermen with whom she had grown up. It seemed to Noelle that for the first time in her life the stench of fish was out of her nostrils. She had never really been aware of it before, because it had always been a part of her. But now everything was suddenly changed. And she owed it all to her father. She was proud of the Way he got along with Monsieur Lanchon. Her father would come to the shop two or three times a week and he and Monsieur Lanchon'would slip out for a cognac or a beer and when they returned there would be an air of camaraderie between them. In the beginning Noelle had disliked Monsieur Lanchon, but his behavior toward her was always circumspect. Noelle heard from one of the girls that Lanchon's wife had once caught nun in the stockroom with a model and had picked up a pair of shears and had barely missed castrating him. Noelle was aware that Lanchon's eyes followed her everywhere she went, but he was always scrupulously polite. "Probably," she thought, with satisfaction, "he is afraid of my father."

At home the atmosphere suddenly seemed much to. Noelle's father no longer struck her mother the constant bickering had stopped. There were and roasts to eat, and after dinner Noelle's fa-would take out a new pipe and fill it with a rich ; tobacco from a leather pouch. He bought him-fta new Sunday suit. The international situation was and Noelle would listen to discussions be her father and his friends. They all seemed to be by the imminent threat to their livelihood, but him Page appeared singularly unconcerned.

September 1, 1939, Hitler's troops invaded Po-and two days later Great Britain and France de war against Germany.

iobilization was begun and overnight the streets filled with uniforms. There was an air of resigna-about what was happening, a déjá vu feeling of an old movie that one had seen before; but was no fear. Other countries might have reason I'tremble before the might of the German armies but

nee was invincible. It had the Maginot Line, an imtrable
fortress that could protect France against
i^asion for a thousand years. A curfew was imposed
rationing was started, but none of those things
tiered Jacques Page. He seemed to have changed, to
?e calmed. The only time Noelle saw him fly into a
was one night when she was in the darkened
chen kissing a boy whom she dated occasionally. ', lights suddenly went on
and Jacques Page stood in him doorway trembling with rage.
"Get out," he screamed at the terrified boy. "And
»your hands off my daughter, you filthy pig!"
The boy fled hi panic. Noelle tried to explain to her
her that they had been doing nothing wrong, but he him too furious to listen.
"I will not have you throw yourself away," he
"He is a nobody, he is not good enough for my
ticess."
Noelle lay awake that night marveling at how much
father loved her and vowing that she would never
do anything to distress him again.
One evening just before closing time a customer
came into the shop and Lanchon asked Noelle to
model some dresses. By the time Noelle finished, everyone
had left the shop except Lanchon and his wife,
who was working on the books in the office. Noelle
went into the empty dressing room to change. She was
in her bra and pants when Lanchon walked into the
loom. He stared at her and his lips began to twitch.
Noelle reached for her dress, but before she could put
it on Lanchon swiftly moved toward her and shoved
his hand between her legs. Noelle was filled with revulsion,
her skin beginning to crawl. She tried to pull
away, but Lanchon-'s grip was strong and he was hurting
her. "You are beautiful," he whispered. "Beautiful,
I will see that you have a good time."
At that moment Lanchon's wife called out to him
and he reluctantly let go of Noelle and scurried out of
the room.
On the way home Noelle debated whether to tell
her father what had happened. He would probably kill
Lanchon. She detested him and could not bear to be
near him, and yet she wanted the job. Besides, her father
might be disappointed if she quit. She decided that
for the moment she would say nothing and would find
a way to handle it herself. The following Friday Madame
Lanchon received a call that her mother was ill
in Vichy. Lanchon drove his wife to the railroad station
and then raced back to the shop. He called Noelle
into his office and told her he was going to take her
away for the weekend. Noelle stared at him, thinMng at first that it was some
kind of joke.
"We win go to Vienna," he babbled. "Tnere fe «19
of the great restaurants of the world there, La Pyr-amide.
It is expensive, but it doesn't matter, I can be

very generous to those who are good to me. How soon
can you be ready?"
She stared at him. "Never" was all she could bring
herself to say. "Never." And she tamed and fled into
of the shop. Monsieur Lanchon looked after
a moment, his face mottled with fury, then
the telephone on his desk. An hour later No* it father walked into the shop. He made straight for her and her face lit up with relief. He had sensed was wrong and had come to rescue her. him was standing at the door to his office. Noelle's
took her arm and hurried her into Lanchon's of
swung around to face her. I'll so glad you came, Papa," Noelle said. "I--"
Lanchon tells me that he made you a
I, offer and you refused him." him stared at him, bewildered. "Offer? He asked me
jtteway with him for the weekend."
I you said no?"
on .Noelle could answer, her father drew his
i:back and slapped her hard across the cheek. She
there in stunned disbelief, her ears ringing, and
ugh a filmy haze heard her father saying, "Stupid! ÍS It's time you started thinking of someone be-yourself,
you selfish little bitch!" And he hit her

minutes later as her father stood at the curb them drive off, Noelle and Monsieur Lanchon
Ifor Vienna.

hotel room consisted of a large double bed,
ap furniture and a washstand and basin in one cor-Monsieur Lanchon was not a man to throw away
; money. He gave the bellboy a small tip and the mo-the bellboy left, Lanchon turned toward Noelle
began to tear off her clothes. He cupped her
in Ms hot, moist hands and squeezed them

God, you are beautiful," he panted. He pulled him her skirt and pants and pushed her onto the bed.
lay there unmoving, uncaring, as though she
suffering from some kind of shock. She had not
one word driving down in the car. Lanchon
hoped that she was not fell. He could sever explain it to
the police or, God forbid, his wife. He hastily took off
his clothes, throwing them on the floor and then moved
onto the bed beside Noelle. Her body was even more
splendid than he had anticipated.
"Your father telb me you have never been fucked."
He grinned. "Well, I am going to show yon what a man
feels like." He rolled his plump belly on top of her and
thrust his organ between her legs. He began to push
harder and harder, forcing himself into her. NoeDe felt
nothing. In her mind she was listening to her father
yelling. You should he grateful to have a kind gentleman

like Monsieur Lanchon wanting to take care of
you. AH you have to do is be nice to Mm. You will do
it for me-And
for yourself. The whole scene had been
a nightmare. She was sure that her father had somehow
misunderstood, bet when she started to explain, he, had
struck her again and begun screaming, "You win do as
you are told. Other girls would be grateful for your
chance." Her chance. She looked up at Lanchon, the
squat ugly body, the panting animal face with its piggish
eyes. This was the Prince to whom her father had
sold her, her beloved father who cherished her and
could not bear to let her waste herself on anyone unworthy.
And she remembered the steaks that had suddenly
appeared on the table and her father's new pipes
and his new suit and she wanted to vomit.
It seemed to Noelle that in the next few hours she
died and was born again. She had died a Princess, and
she was reborn a slut Slowly she had become aware of
her surroundings and of what was happening to her.
She was filled with a hatred such as she had not known
could exist. She would never forgive her father for his
betrayal. Oddly enough she did not hate Lanchon, for
she understood him. He was a man with the one weakness
common to all men. From now on, Noelle decided,
that weakness was going to be her strength. She
would learn to use it. Her father had been right all
along. She was a Princess and the world did belong to
one now she knew how to get it. ft was so simple.
I the world because they had the strength, the
and the power; therefore it was necessary to
or at least one man. But in order to do that
to be prepared. She had a great deal to learn. a was the beginning.
turned her attention to Monsieur Lanchon. She
him, feeling, experiencing how the male or and what it could do to a woman.
, his frenzy at having this beautiful creature under
, bucking body, Lanchon did not even notice that
simply lay there, but he would not have cared,
asting his eyes on her was enough to rouse him
of passion he had not felt in years. He was
to the accordioned, middle-aged body of
and the tired merchandise of the whores of
lie, and to find this fresh, young girl under him him like a miracle come
into his life.
the miracle was just beginning for Lanchon. Af-had
spent himself making love to Noelle for the
time, she spoke and said, "Lie still." She began
eriment on him with her tongue and her mouth
hands, trying new things, finding the soft, sen-areas
of his body and working on them until
: cried aloud with pleasure. It was like pressing rows of buttons. When
Noelle did this, he moaned
she did this, he writhed hi ecstasy. It was so

This was her school, this was her education. This
egLnning of power.
bey spent three days there and never once went to him Pyramide, and during those days and nights, Lan
taught her the little that he knew about sex, and
I discovered a great deal more.
; When they drove back to Marseille, Lanchon was him happiest man in all France. In the past he had had
affairs with shopgirls in a cabinet particuliers, a
: that had a private dining room with a couch;
had haggled with prostitutes, been niggardly with
for his mistresses, and notoriously penurious
with his wife and children. Now he found himself
saying magnanimously, "I'm going to set yon up in an
apartment, Noelle. Can you cook?"
"Yes," Noelle replied.
"Good. I will come for lunch every day and we will
make love. And two or three nights a week, I will come
for dinner." He put his hand on her knee and patted it.
"How does that sound?"
"It sounds wonderful," Noelle said.
"I will even give you an allowance. Not a large one,"
he added quickly, "but enough so you can go out and
buy pretty things from time to time. All I ask is that
you see no one but me. You belong to me now."
"As you wish, Auguste," she said.
Lanchon sighed contentedly, and when he spoke, his
voice was soft. "I've never felt this way about anyone
before. And do you know why?"
"No, Auguste."
"Because you make me feel young. You and I are
going to have a wonderful life together."
They reached Marseille late that evening, driving in
silence, Lanchon with his dreams, Noelle with hers.
"I will see you in the shop tomorrow at nine
o'clock," Lanchon said. He thought it over. "If you are
tired in the morning, sleep a little longer. Come in at
nine-thirty."
Thank you, Auguste."
He pulled out a fistful of francs and held them out.
"Here. Tomorrow afternoon you will look for an
apartment This will be a deposit to hold it until lean
see it"
She stared at the francs hi his hand.
"Is something wrong?" Lanchon asked.
"I want us to have a really beautiful place," Noelle
said, "where we can enjoy being together."
"I'm not a rich man," he protested.
Noelle smiled understandingly and put her hand on
his thigh. Lanchon stared at her a long moment and
then nodded.
right," he said. He reached into his wallet
peeling off francs, watching her face as he

him she seemed satisfied, he stopped, flushed with
generosity. After all what did it matter? Lan-.
was a shrewd businessman, and he knew that this
I insure that Noelle would never leave him.
watched him as he drove happily away, then
upstairs, packed her things and removed her
from her hiding place. At ten o'clock that
, she was on a train to Paris.
the train pulled into Paris early the next
the PLM Station was. crowded with those
who had eagerly just arrived, and those who just as eagerly Seeing the city.
The din in the sta-was
.deafening as people shouted greetings and
farewells, rudely pushing and shoving, but No-did
not mind. The moment she stepped off the
before she had even had a chance to see the city,
knew that she was home. It was Marseille that need like a strange town and
Paris the city to which
> belonged. It was an odd, heady sensation, and No
reveled in it, drinking in the noises, the crowds, the
sent. It all belonged to her. All she had to do
was claim it. She picked up her suitcase and start-I
toward the exit
Outside hi the bright sunlight with the traffic in-nely
whizzing around, Noelle hesitated, suddenly re-ig
that she had nowhere to go. Half a dozen taxis
lined up hi front of the station. She got into the
tone.
"Whereto?"
She hesitated. "Could you recommend a nice inex-sive
hotel?"
The driver swung around to stare at her appraising-y. "You're new in town?"
"Yes."
He nodded. "You'll be needing a job, I suppose."
"Yes."
"You're in luck," he said "Have you ever done any
modeling?"
Noelle's heart leaped. "As a matter of fact, I have,"
she said.
"My sister works for one of the big fashion houses,"
the driver confided. "Just this morning she mentioned
that one of the girls quit. Would you like to see if the
vacancy is still open?"
"That would be wonderful," Noelle replied.
"If I take you there, it will cost you ten francs."
She frowned.
"It win be worth it," he promised.
"All right." She leaned back to the seat. The driver
put the taxi to gear and joined the maniacal traffic
heading toward the center of town. The driver chattered
as they drove, but Noelle did not hear a word he
said. She was drinking to the sights of her city. She

supposed that because of the blackout, Paris was more
subdued than usual, but to Noelle it seemed a city of
pure magic. It had an elegance, a style, even an aroma
all its own. They passed Notre Dame and crossed the
Pont Neuf to the Right Bank and swung toward Marshall
Foch Boulevard. In the distance Noelle could see
the Eiffel Tower, dominating the city. Through the
rearview mirror, the driver saw the expression on her
face.
"Nice, huh?"
"It's beautiful," Noelle answered quietly. She still
could not believe she was here. It was a Kingdom fit
for a Princess... for her.
The taxi pulled up to front of a dark, gray stone
building on the rue de Provence.
"We're here," the driver announced. "Thafs two
francs on the meter and ten francs for me."
"How do I know the job win still be open?" Noelle
asked.
The driver shrugged. "I told you, the gM just left
this morning. If you don't want to go in, I'll take you
back to the station."

»," Noelle said quickly. She opened her purse,
, a out twelve francs and handed them to the driver,
^stared at the money, then looked at her. Embar-she
reached into her purse and handed him an- franc.
nodded, iimmflfag, and watched her lift her
: out of the taxi.
he started to drive away, Noelle asked, "Whafg
: sister's name?"
fjeanette."
stood on the curb watching the taxi disap,
then turned to look at the building. There was no
atifying sign in front, but she supposed that a fashle
dress house did not need a sign. Everyone I'll know where to find it. She picked up her
went up to the door and rang the bell. A few
its later the door was opened by a maid wearing black apron. She looked at Noelle blankly.
;"Yes?"
JL "Excuse me," Noelle said. "I understand that there
|an opening for a model." a The woman stared at her and blinked.
"Who sent you?"
i,"Jeanette's brother."
"Come in." She opened the door wider and Noelle
into a reception hall done in the style of the
I's. There was a large Baccarat chandelier hanging
the ceiling, several more scattered around the
and through an open door, Noelle could see a sit-room
filled with antique furniture and a staircase

; upstairs. On a beautiful inlaid table were copies I Figaro and L'Echo de Paris. "Wait here. I'll find out one Madame Delys has time to see you now." k<l
'Thank you," Noelle said. She set her suitcase down
" walked over to a large mirror on the wall. Her
were wrinkled from the train ride, and she sudly
regretted her impulsiveness in coming here be*
reshening up. It was important to make a good impression. Still, as she examined herself, she knew
that she looked beautiful. She knew this without conceit,
accepting her beauty as an asset, to be used like
any other asset. Noelle turned as she saw a girl in the
mirror coming down the stairs. The girl had a good figure
and a pretty face, and was dressed in a long brown
skirt and a high-necked blouse. Obviously the quality
of models here was high. She gave Noelle a brief smile
and went into the drawing room. A moment later Madame
Delys entered the room. She was in her forties
and was short and dumpy with cold, calculating eyes.
She was dressed in a gown that Noelle estimated must
have cost at least two thousand francs.
"Regina tells me that you are looking for a job," she
said.
"Yes, ma'am," Noelle replied.
"Where are you from?"
"Marseille."
. Madame Delys snorted. The playpen of drunken
sailors."
Noelle's face fell
Madame Delys patted her on the shoulder. "It does
not matter, my dear. How old are you?"
"Eighteen."
Madame Delys nodded. "That Is good. I think my customers
will like you. Do you have any family in Paris?"
"No."
"Excellent Are you prepared to start work right
away?"
"Oh, yes," Noelle assured her eagerly.
From upstairs came the sound of laughter and a moment
later a red-headed girl walked down the stairs on
the arm of a fat, middle-aged man. The girl was wearing
only a thin negligee,
"Finished already?" Madame Delys asked.
"I've worn Angela out," the man grinned. He saw
Noelle. "Who's this little beauty?"
"This is Yvette, «hit new girl," Madame Delys said.
And without hesitation added, "She's from Anfibes, the
daughter of a Prince."
him never screwed a Princess," the man exclaimed.
' much?"
a francs."
you must be joking. Thirty."
Forty. And believe me, you'll get your money's him."
it is a deal." a turned to Noelle. She had vanished.

Noelle walked the streets of Paris, hour after hour, strolled along the Champs-Élysées, down one side up the other, wandering through the Lido Arcade stopping at every shop to gaze at the incredible mcopia of jewelry and dresses and leather goods perfumes, "and she wondered what Paris was like there were no shortages. The wares displayed hi windows were dazzling, and while one part of her like a country bumpkin, another part of her knew one day these things would belong to her. She Iced through the Bois and down the rue du ubourg-St.-Honore and along the avenue Victor until she began to feel tired and hungry. She had purse and suitcase at Madame Delys', but she no intention of going back there. She would send : her things.

Noelle was neither shocked nor upset by what had appened. It was simply that she knew the difference etween a courtesan and a whore. Whores did not age the course of history: courtesans did. Mean-lie she was without a cent. She had to find a way to until she could find a job the next day. Dusk him beginning to brush the sky, and the merchants and atel doormen were busy putting up blackout curtains ainst possible air attacks. To solve her immediate oblem, Noelle needed to find someone to buy her a 1 hot dinner. She asked directions from a gendarme then headed for the Crillon Hotel. Outside, forbid iron shutters covered the windows, but inside, the lobby was a masterpiece of subdued elegance, soft and understated. Noelle walked in confidently as if she belonged there and took a seat in a chair facing the elevator. She had never done this before, and she was a bit nervous. But she remembered how easy it had been to handle Auguste Lanchon. Men were really very uncomplicated. There was only one lesson a girl had to remember: A man was soft when he was hard and hard when he was soft. So it was only necessary to keep him hard until he gave you What you wanted.

Now, looking around the lobby, Noelle decided that it would be a simple matter to catch the eye of an unattached male on his way, perhaps, to a lonely dinner.

"Pardon, Mademoiselle,"

Noelle turned her head to look up at a large man hi a dark suit. She had never seen a detective in her life, but there was no doubt whatever hi her mind.

"Is Mademoiselle waiting for someone?"

MYes," Noelle replied, trying to keep her voice steady. "I'm waiting for a friend."

She was suddenly acutely aware of her wrinkled dress, and the fact that she carried no purse.

"Is your friend a guest of this hotel?"

She felt a surge of panic rising in her "He--er--not
exactly."
He studied Noelle a moment, then said in a
hardened tone, "May I see your identification?"
"I--I don't have it with me." she stammered. "I lost
it."
The detective said, "Perhaps Mademoiselle will
come with me." He put a firm hand on her arm, and
she rose to her feet.
And at that moment someone took her other arm
and said, "Sony I'm late, cherie, but you know how
those damned cocktail parties are. You have to blast
your way out. Beeo waiting long?"
Noelle swung around in astonishment to look at the
speaker. He was a ta& man, his body lean and hard-looking,
and he wore a strange, unfamiliar uniform. He
57

blue-black hair with a widow's peak and eyes the
of a dark, stormy sea, with long, thick lashes, IBs
had the look of an old Florentine coin. It was
' irregular face, the two profiles not quite matching,
ugh the minter's hand had slipped for an instant,
a face that was extraordinarily alive and mobile
that you felt it was ready to smile, to laugh, to
The only thing that saved it from being femily
beautiful was a strong, masculine chin with a him cleft hi it
gestured toward the detective. "Is this man both-you?"
His voice was deep, and he spoke French him a very slight accent.
N-no," Noelle said, in a bewildered voice.
"I beg your pardon, sir," the hotel detective was . "I misunderstood. We have
been having a
Mem here lately with < . ." He turned to Noelle.
'lease accept my apologies, Mademoiselle." the stranger turned to Noelle.
"Well now, I don't v. What do you think?"
Noelle swallowed and nodded quickly.
The man turned to the detective. "Mademoiselle's yet generous. Just watch
yourself in the future." He followed Noelle's arm and they headed for the door.
When they reached the street, Noelle said, "I--I wasn't know how to thank
you, Monsieur." I've always hated policemen." The stranger grinned, him you want
me to get you a taxi?"
Noelle stared at him, the panic beginning to rise in again, as she remembered
her situation. "No."
"Right Good night" He walked over to the stand
started to get into a taxi, turned around and saw
she was standing there, rooted, staring after him. the doorway of the hotel
was the detective watching,
stranger hesitated, then walked back to Noelle.
fou'd better get out of here," he advised. "Our
pdend's still interested hi you."
"I have nowhere to go," she replied.
He nodded and reached into his pocket

ul don't want your money," she said quickly.
He looked at her in surprise. "What do you want?"
he asked.
"To have dinner with you."
He smiled and said, "Sorry. I have a date, and Fm
late alreadv "
"Then go ahead," she said. «Ill be fine."
He shoved the bills back into his pocket. "Suit yourself,
honey," he said. "Au 'voir." He turned and began
walking toward the taxi again. Noelle looked after him,
wondering what was wrong with her. She knew she had
behaved stupidly, but she also knew that she could not
have done anything else. From the first moment she
had looked at him she had experienced a reaction that
she had never felt before, a wave of emotion so strong
that she could almost reach out and touch it. She did
not even know his name, and would probably never see
him again. Noelle glanced toward the hotel and saw
the detective moving purposefully toward her. It was
her own fault. This time she would not be able to talk
her way out of it. She felt a hand on her shoulder, and
as she turned to see who it was, the stranger took her
arm and propelled her toward the taxi, quickly opened
the door and climbed in beside her. He gave the driver
an address. The taxi pulled away, leaving the detective
at the curb, staring after them. "What about your
dater Noelle asked.
"It's a party," he shrugged. "One more won't make
any difference. I'm Larry Douglas. What's your
name?"
"Noelle Page."
«Where are you from, Noelle?"
She turned and looked into his brilliant dark eyes
and said, "Antibes. I am the daughter of a Prince."
He laughed, showing even, white teeth.
"Good for you, Princess," he said.
"Are you English?"
"American."
She looked at his uniform. "America is not at war."
in the British RAF," he explained. They've
, formed a group of American flyers. It's called the I Squadron."
Jut why should you fight for England?"
England's fighting for us," he said. "Only
jfdon't know it yet"
Noelle shook her head. "I don't believe that Hitler I'll Boche clown."
"Maybe. But he's a clown who knows what the Geri
want: to rule the world."
jToelle listened, fascinated, as Larry discussed Hit-military
strategy, the sudden withdrawal from the
of Nations, the mutual defense pact with Japan
Italy, not because of what he was saying but be*
she enjoyed watching his face as he talked. His
eyes sparkled with enthusiasm as he spoke, bias him an overpowering,

irresistible vitality.
lie had never met anyone like him. He was--rarity of rarities--a spendthrift with himself. He . open and warm and alive, sharing himself, enjoy-b, making sure that everyone around him enjoyed was like a magnet pulling into his orbit everyone him approached.
arrived at the party, which was being given in ísmall flat on the rue'Chemin Vert. The apartment filled with a group of laughing, shouting people, st of them young. Larry introduced Noelle to the a predatory, sexy-looking redhead, and then him swallowed by the crowd.
Noelle caught glimpses of during the evening, surrounded by eager young each trying to capture his attention. And yet him was no ego about him, Noelle thought. It was as he were totally unaware of how attractive he
Someone found a drink for Noelle and someone > offered to bring her a plate of food from the buffet, she was suddenly not hungry. She wanted to be the American, wanted him away from the girls him crowded around him. Men were coming up to her trying to start conversations, but Noelle's mind was elsewhere. From the moment they had walked in» the American had completely ignored her, had acted as though she did not exist. Why not? Noelle thought Why should he bother with her when he could have any girl at the party? Two men were trying to engage her in conversation, but she could not concentrate. The room had suddenly become unbearably hot She looked around for a means of escape.
A voice said in her ear, "Let's go," and a few moments later she and the American were out on the street, in him cool night tax. The city was dark and quiet against the invisible Germans in the sky, and the cars glided through the streets like silent fish in a black sea. . ' .'. . :
They could not find a taxi, so they walked, had dinner in a little bistro on the place they Vfctoires and Noelle found that she was.starved. She studied the American sitting across from bet, and she wondered what it was that had happened to her. It was as though he had touched some wellspring deep within her that she had never even known existed. She had never felt happiness like this before. They talked about everything.
She told him about her background, and he told her that became from South Boston and was Boston Irish.
IBs mother had been born in Kerry County.
''Where did you learn to speak French so well?" Noelle asked.
"I used to spend my summers at Cap D'Antibes when I was a kid. My old man was a stock-market tycoon until the bears got him."
"Bearer

So Larry had to explain to her about the arcane
ways of the stock market hi America. Noelle did not
care what he talked about, so long as he kept talking.
"Where are ydNiïïving?"
"Nowhere." She told him about the taxi driver and
Madame Delys and the fat man believing she was a
Princess and offering to pay forty francs for her, and
Larry laughed aloud. > ,
him you remember where the boose is?"

I^Come on, Princess." . '.
they arrived at the house on the rue de
nee, the door was opened by the same uniformed
Her eyes lit up as she saw the handsome young
then darkened when she saw who was with

ifa want to see Madame Delys," Larry said. He
I Noelle walked into the reception halL There were
girls in the drawing room beyond. The maid
and a few minutes later Madame Delys entered,
evening, Monsieur," she said to Larry. She
I to Noelle, "Ah, I hope you have changed your

hasn't," said Larry, pleasantly. "You have
sthing that belongs to the Princess."
; Delys looked at him questioningly.
pHer suitcase and purse.*'
S: Madame Days hesitated a moment, then left the
A few minutes later the maid returned, carrying Noel's purse and suitcase.
"Merci," Larry said. He turned to Noelle. "Let's go,

tat night Noelle moved in with Larry, to a small,
hotel on the rue Lafayette. There was no discus*
about it, it was inevitable for both of them. When
made love that night, it was more exciting than Noelle had ever known, a wild
primitive « -that shook them both. She lay in Larry's arms
night, holding him dose, happier man she had ever
I possible,
next morning they awoke, made love, and went
to explore the city. Larry was a wonderful guide,
he made Paris seem a lovely toy for Noellé's
aent. They had lunch in the Tuileries, spent tine
at Mai Maisón and spent hours wandering
ad the place they Vosges at the end of Notre Dame,
oldest section of Paris, built by Louis Xm. He
showed her places that were off the beaten track of the
tourists, the place Maubert with its colorful street market
and the quai de la Mégisserie with its cages of
brightly hued birds and squeaky animals. He took her

through the Marché de Bud and they listened to the
din of the hawkers, pitching the merits of their bins of
fresh tomatoes, their seaweed-bedded oysters, their
neatly labeled cheeses. They went to the Du Pont, on
Montparnasse. They had dinner on the Bateau Mouche
and finished up by having onion soup at four in the
morning at Les Halles with the butchers and truck
drivers. Before they were through Larry had collected
a large group of friends, and Noelle realized that it was
because he had the gift of laughter. He had taught her
to laugh and she had not known that laughter was
within her. It was like a gift from a god. She was grateful
to Larry and very much in love with him. It was
dawn when they returned to their hotel room. Noelle
was exhausted, but Larry was filled with energy, a restless
dynamo. Noelle lay hi bed watching him as he
stood at the window looking at the sun rise over the
rooftops of Paris.

"I love Paris," he said. "It's like a temple to the best
things that men have ever done. It's a city of beauty
and food and love." He turned to her and grinned,
"Not necessarily in that order."

Noelle watched as he took off his clothes and
climbed into bed beside her. She held him, loving the
feel of him, the male smell of him. She thought of her
father and how he had betrayed her. She had been
wrong to judge an men by him and Auguste Lanchon.
She knew now that there were men like Larry Douglas.
And she also knew that (here could never be anyone
else for her.

"Do you know who the two greatest men who ever
lived were, Princess?" he was asking.

"You," she said.

"Wilbur and Orvflle Wright They gave man his
real freedom. Have you ever flown?" She shook her

«3

"We had a summer place in Montauk---that's at
of Long Island--and when I was a kid I used
the gulls wheel through the air over the
riding the current, and I would have given my
I to be up there with them. I knew I wanted to be a a before I could walk. A
friend of the family took on up in an old biplane when I was nine, and I took
Iftest flying lesson when I was fourteen. That's when
lly alive, when I'm in the air."
[later:

Noel's going to be a world war. Germany wants to him it all."
wont get France, Larry. No one can cross the
aot line."
the snorted; "he crossed it a hundred times." She
at him puzzled. "In the air, Princess. This is I to be an air war... my war."
I And later, casually:
t'í'Why don't we get married?"
| It was the happiest moment of Noelle's life. on
Sunday was a relaxed, lazy day. They had breakfast
a little outdoor cafe in Montmartre, went back to
room and spent almost the entire day in bed. No-could
not believe anyone could be so ecstatic. It
pure magic when they made love, but she was just
content to lie there and listen to Larry talk and
ch him as he moved restlessly about the room. Just
near him was enough for her. It was odd, she
how things worked out She had grown up
called Princess by her father, and now, even
ugh it had happened as a joke, Larry was calling
Princess. When she was with Larry, she was some» g. He had restored her faith in men. He was her
and Noelle knew that she would never need
^anything more, and it seemed incredible to her that she on could be so lucky, that he felt the same way about her.
"I wasn't going to get married until this war was
[over," he told her. "But to bell with that Plans are
made to be changed, right, Princess?"
She nodded, filed with a happiness that threatened
to burst inside her.
"Let's get married by some moire in the country,"
Larry said "Unless yon want a big wedding?"
Noelle shook her head. "The country sounds wonderful."
He nodded. "Deal. I have to report back to my
Squadron tonight 111 meet you here next Friday. How
does that sound?"
1--I don't know if I can stand being away from
you that long." Noel's voice was shaky.
Larry took her in his arms and held her. "Love me?"
he asked.
"More than my life," Noelle replied simply.
Two hours later Larry was on his way back to England.
He did not let her drive to the airport with him.
"I don't like good-byes," he said. He gave her a large
fistful of franc notes. "Buy yourself a wedding gown,
Princess. Ill see you in it next week." And he was
gone.
Noelle spent the next week in a state of euphoria,
going back to the places she and Larry had been,
spending hours dreaming about their life together. The
days seemed to drag by, the minutes stubbornly refusing
to move, until Noelle thought she would go out of
her mind.
She went to a dozen shops looking for her wedding dress, and finally she

found exactly what she wanted, at
Madeleine Vionett. It was a beautiful white organza
with a high-necked bodice, long sleeves with a row of
six pearl buttons, and three crinoline petticoats. It cost
much mole than Noelle had anticipated, but she did
not hesitate. She used all the money that Larry had
given her and nearly all her own savings. Her whole
being was centered on Larry. She thought about ways
to please him, she searched through her mind for memories
that might amuse him, anecdotes that would entertain Mtn. She felt iftff a
schoolgirl.
1 so it was that Noelle waited for Friday to come,
agony of impatience, and when it finally arrived
up at dawn and spent two hours bathing and yet, changing clothes and changing
again, trying him which dress would please Larry most She put
wedding gown, but quickly took it off again,
I that it might bring bad luck. She was in a frenzy
itement
ten o'clock Noelle stood in front of the pier glass
lie bedroom, and she knew that she had never
as beautiful. There was no ego in her appraisal;
simply pleased for Larry, glad that she could
him this gift By noon he had not appeared, and
wished that he had told her what time he ex
to arrive. She kept phoning the desk for messages
ten-minutes
and kept picking up the phone to
sure it was working. By six o'clock that evening,
was still no word from him. By midnight he had
: called, and Noelle sat huddled in a chair, staring at
> phone, willing it to ring. She fell asleep, and when
: woke, it was dawn, Saturday. She was still in the him, stiff and cold. The
dress she had so carefully him was wrinkled, and there was a run in her stock*

elle changed clothes and stayed hi the room all
day, stationing herself hi front of the open win
telling herself that if she stayed there, Larry
appear, if she left, something terrible would
to him. As Saturday morning lengthened into
noon, she began to be filled with the conviction
there had been an accident. Larry's plane had
and he was lying in a field or hi a hospital,
or dead. Noelle's mind was filled with ghastly
She sat up all night Saturday, sick with worry,
[to leave the room and not knowing how to reach

Noelle had not heard from him by Sunday
, she could stand it no longer. She had to telephone
But how? With a war on it was difficult to place

an overseas call and she was not even certain where
Larry was. She knew only that he flew with the RAF in
some American squadron. She picked up the telephone

and spoke to the switchboard operator.
"It is impossible," the operator said flatly.
Noelle explained the situation, and whether it was her words or the frantic despair in her voice she never knew, but two hours later she was talking to the War Ministry in London. They could not help her, but they transferred her to the Air Ministry at Whitehall who put her through to Combat Operations, where she was disconnected before she could get any information. It was four more hours before Noelle was reconnected, and by then she was on the verge of hysteria. Air Operations could give her no information and suggested she try the War Ministry.
"IVe talked to them!" Noelle screamed into the phone. She began to sob, and the male English voice at the other end of the phone said in embarrassment, "Please, miss, it can't be that bad. Hold on a moment."
Noelle held the receiver in her hand, knowing that it was hopeless, certain that Larry was dead and that she would never know how or where he died. And she was about to replace the receiver when the voice spoke in her ear again and said cheerfully, "What you want, miss, is the Eagle Squadron. They're the Yanks, based in Yorkshire. If him a bit irregular, but I'm going to put you through to Church Fenton, their airfield. Then-chaps will be able to help you." And the line went

It was eleven o'clock that night before Noelle could get the call through again. A disembodied voice said, "Church Fenton Air Base," and the connection was so bad that Noelle could barely hear him. It was as though he were speaking from the bottom of the sea. He was obviously having difficulty hearing her. "Speak up, please," he said. By now, Noelle's nerves were so frayed that she could hardly control her voice.
"I'm calling"--she did not even know his rank.

Captain? Major? Tm calling Lany
;las. This is his fiancee."
cant hear you, miss. Can you speak louder,
e?"
. the edge of panic Noelle screamed out the words him, sure mat the man at the other end of the phone
trying to conceal from her that Larry was dead,
a miraculous instant the line cleared, and she
the voice saying as though he were in the next
"Lieutenant Larry Douglas?"
fes," she said, holding on tightly to her emotions.
ffjust a moment, please."
ïoelle waited for what seemed an eternity and then
voice came back on the line and said, "Lieutenant

Jas is on weekend leave. If it's urgent, he can be found at-the Hotel Savoy ballroom in London, Gen*
[Davis' party." And the line went dead.

? When the maid came in to clean the room the next day, she found Noelle on the floor, semiconscious,
maid stared at her a moment, tempted to mind her
business and leave. Why did these things always
to happen in her rooms? She went over and touched Noelle's forehead. It was burning hot. Grum-the
maid waddled down the hall and asked the to to send up the manager. One hour later an am-iance
pulled up outside the hotel and two young in-carrying
a stretcher were directed to Noelle's
. Noelle was unconscious. The young intern in
raised her eyelid, put a stethoscope to her chest
1 listened to the rales as she breathed. "Pneumonia," him said to his companion. "Let's get her out of here."
IfThey lifted Noelle onto the stretcher and five min-later
the ambulance was racing toward the hospi-:
She was rushed into an oxygen tent, and it was four
before she was fully conscious. She dragged her-reluctantly
up from the murky green depths of
livion, subconsciously knowing something terrible
happened and fighting not to remember what it

was. As the awful thing floated closer and closer to the
surface of her mind, and she struggled to keep it from
herself, it suddenly came to her clear and whole. Larry
Douglas. Noelle began to weep, racked with sobs until
she finally drifted off into a half-sleep. She felt a hand
gently holding hers, and she knew that Larry had come
back to her, that everything was all right. Noelle
opened her eyes and stared at a stranger in a white uniform,
taking her pulse. "Well! Welcome back," he announced
cheerfully.
"Where am I?" Noelle asked.
"L'Hotel-Dieu, the City HospitaL"
"What am I doing here?"
"Getting well. You've had double pneumonia. I'm
Israel Katz." He was young, with & strong, intelligent
face and deep-set brown eyes.
"Are you my doctor?"
"Intern," he said. "I brought you in." He smiled at
her. "I'm glad you made it We weren't sure."
"How long have I beea here?"
"Four days."
"Would you do me a favor?" she asked weakly.
"I'll can."
"Call the Hotel Lafayette. Ask them--" she hesitated.
"Ask them if there are any messages for me."
"Well, Fm awfully busy--"
Noelle squeezed his hand fiercely. "Please. It's important

My fiance is trying to get hi touch with me."
He grinned. "I don't blame him. All right. I'll .take care of it," he promised. "Now you get some sleep."
"Not until I hear from you," she said.
He left, and Noelle lay there waiting. Of course Larry had been trying to get in touch with her. There had been some terrible misunderstanding. He would explain it all to her and everything would be all right again.
It was two hours before Israel Katz returned. He walked up to her bed and set down a suitcase. "I your clothes. I went to the hotel myself," he looked up at him, and he could see her face a sorry," he said, embarrassed. "No messages."
him stared at him for a long time, then turned her
> to the wall, dry-eyed.

elle was released from the hospital two days later.
Katz came to say good-bye to her. "Do you \ any place to go?" he asked. "Or a job?"
> shook her head.
a work do you do?"
I'm a model."
[might be able to help you."
remembered the taxi driver and Madame Delys. wasn't need any help," she said,
el Katz wrote a name on a piece of paper. "If lange your mind, go there. It's a small fashion him. An aunt of mine owns it I'll talk to her about
. Do you have any money?"
lie did not answer.
There." He pulled a few francs out of his pocket and them to her. "I'm sorry I don't have more. In aren't very well paid."
: you," Noel said.
; sat at a small street cafe sipping a coffee and de-how to pick up the pieces of her life. She knew she had to survive, for she had a reason to live
<a. She was filled with a deep and burning hatred
: was so all-consuming that it left no room for any-eke.
She was an avenging Phoenix rising from she's of the emotions that Larry Douglas had mur-in her. She would not rest until she had de-him.
She did not know how, or when, but she
' that one day she would make it happen.
she needed a job and a place to sleep. Noelle
. her purse and took out the piece of paper that the young intern had given her. She studied it a moment and made up her mind. That afternoon she went to see Israel Kate's aunt and was given a job modeling in a small, second-rate fashion house on the rue Bourault.
Israel Kate's aunt turned out to be a middle-aged, gray-haired woman with the face of a harpy and the soul of an angel. She mothered all her girls and they

adored her. Her name was Madame Rose. She gave
Noelle an advance on her salary and found her a tiny
apartment near the. salon. The first thing Noelle did
when she unpacked was to hang up her wedding dress.
She put it in the front of the closet so that it was the
first thing she saw in the morning and the last thing she
saw when she undressed at night

Noelle knew that she was pregnant before there
were any visible signs of it, before any tests had been
made, before she missed her period. She could sense
the new life that had formed in her womb, and at night
she lay in bed staring at the ceiling thinking about it,
her eyes glowing with wild animal pleasure.
On her first day off Noelle phoned Israel Katz and
made a date to meet him for lunch.
"I'm pregnant," she told him.
"How do you know? Have you had any tests?"
"I don't need any tests."
He shook his head. "Noelle, a lot of women think
they are going to have babies when they are not How
many periods have you missed?"
She pushed the question aside, impatiently, "I want
your help."
He stared at her. 'To get rid of the baby? Have you
discussed this with the father?"
"He's not here."
71

on face tightened angrily. "Do you think everything
|a price, Noelle?"
course," she said simply. "Anything can be
lit and sold." does that include you?"
I^Yes, but Tm very expensive. Will you help me?"
here was a long hesitation. "All right. Ill want to
: some tests first"
toy well."
following week Israel Katz arranged for NoeHe
to the laboratory at the hospital. When the test
Its were returned two days later, he telephoned her
ork. "You were right," he said. "You're pregnant"
[know."
|fTve arranged for you to have a curettage at the
ital. he told them that your husband was killed in
; accident and that you are unable to have the baby.
1 do the operation next Saturday."
f*No," she said.
|MIs Saturday a bad day for you?"
|'Tm not ready for the abortion yet, Israel. I just wanted to know that I
could count on you to help me."
Rose noticed the change in Noelle, not
a physical change, but something that went him deeper, a radiance, an inner

glow that seemed to
. her. Noelle walked around with a constant smile, as
_ him hugging some wonderful secret.
í"Ýou have found a lover," Madame Rose said. "It
him in your eyes."
^Noelle nodded. "Yes, Madame."
| "He is good for you. Hold onto him."
in will," Noelle promised. "As long as I can."
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| "How do you feel?"
^"Wonderful."
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no "No," Noelle said. "I think of it all the time." him "How do you feel?"
him «'Wonderful.'»
I've been looking at the calendar. I think that we
had better go to work."
"I'm not ready yet," Noelle said.
Three weeks passed before Israel Katz telephoned
her again.
"How about having dinner with me?" he asked.
"AH right"
They arranged to meet at a cheap cafe on the rue de
Chat Qui Peche. Noelle had started to suggest a better
restaurant when she remembered what Israel had said
about interns nothaving much money.
He was waiting for her when she arrived. They chatted
aimlessly through dinner and it was not until the
coffee arrived that Israel discussed what was on his
mind.
"Do you still want to have the abortion?" he asked.
Noelle looked at him in surprise. "Of course."
"Then you must have it right away. You're more
than two months pregnant."
She shook her head. "No, not yet, Israel"
"Is this your first pregnancy?"
"Yes."
"Then let me tell you something, Noelle. Up until
three months, an abortion is usually an easy matter.
The embryo has not been fully formed and all you
need is a simple curettage, but after three months"--he
hesitated--"it's another kind of operation, and it becomes
dangerous. The longer you wait, the more dangerous
it becomes. I want you to have the operation
now."

Noelle leaned forward. "What's the baby like?"
"Now?" He shrugged. "Just a lot of cells. Of course,
all the nuclei are there to form a complete human
being."
"And after three months?"
"The embryo starts to become a person.1*
"Can it feel things?"
"It responds to blows and loud noises."
lie sat there, her eyes locked onto his. "Can ft feel
a
suppose so. But it is protected with an amniotic -" He suddenly felt an
uneasy stilting. 'It would be
' hard for anything to hurt it"
elle lowered her eyes and sat staling at the table»
it and thoughtful.
Katz studied her a moment and then said
"Noelle, if you want to keep this baby and are
to because it will have no father . . . well, I

be willing to marry you and give the baby a
»

looked up in surprise. "I have already told you. wasn't want this baby. I
want to have an abortion."
for Christ's sake, have it!" Israel shouted. He
[his voice as he realized that other patrons were yet at him. "If you wait
much longer, there isn't a
in France who will do it. don't you understand? him wait too long, you could
die!"
understand," Noelle said quietly. "If I were going
e this baby, what kind of diet would you put me

ran his fingers through his hair, bewildered. him of milk and fruit, lean
meat"
: night on her way home Noelle stopped at the
market near her apartment and bought two
icf milk and a large box of fresh fruit.
Ten days later Noelle went into Madame Rose's of
told her that she was pregnant and asked for a
: of absence.
how long?" Madame Rose asked, eyeing No-i
figure.
If Six or seven weeks."
get Rose sighed. "Are yon sure what you are is the best thing?"
$Tm sure," Noelle replied.
|HIs there anythingl can do?"
ff'Nothing."
"Very well. Come back to me as soon as you can. I
will ask the cashier to give you an advance on your salary."
"Thank you, Madame."

For the next four weeks Noelle never left her apartment,
except to buy groceries. She felt no hunger and

ate very little for herself, but she drank enormous quantities of milk for the baby and crammed her body with fruit. She was not alone in the apartment. The baby was with her and she talked to him constantly. She knew it was a boy just as she had known she was pregnant. She had named him Larry.
"I want you to grow to be big and strong," she said as she drank her milk. "I want you to be healthy . . . healthy and strong when you die." She lay in bed every day plotting her vengeance against Larry and his son. What was in her body was not a part of her. It belonged to him and she was going to kill it. It was the only thing of his that he had left her, and she was going to destroy it just as he had tried to destroy her. How little Israel Kate had understood her! She was not interested in a formless embryo that knew nothing. She wanted Larry's spawn to feel what was going to happen to him, to suffer, as she had suffered. The wedding dress was hanging near her bed now, always in sight, a talisman of evil, a reminder of his betrayal First, Larry's son, then Larry.
The phone rang often, but Noelle lay in bed, lost in her dreams until it stopped. She was sure that it was Israel Katz trying to reach her.
One evening there was a pounding on the door. Noelle lay in bed, ignoring it, but finally when the pounding continued, she dragged herself up and opened the door.
Israel Katz was standing there, his face filled with concern. "My God, Noelle, I've been calling you for days."

looked at her bulging stomach. "I thought you lit have had it done somewhere else."
I shook her head. "No. You're going to do it."
p Israel stared at her. "Haven't you understood any I told you? It's too late! No one's going to do it"
: saw the empty bottles of milk and the fresh fruit , the table, then looked back at her. "You do want him baby," he said. "Why won't you admitjt?"
jlTell me, Israel, what's he like now?"
,*Who?"
^**The baby. Does he have eyes and ears? Does he him fingers and toes? Can he feel pain?"
Christ's sake, Noelle, stop it You talk as if , as if ..."
;"What?"
Dthing." He shook his head hi despair. 1 don't

li. lyou'"
f.$fae smiled softly. "No. You don't"

| He stood there a moment, making up his mind.
"All right, I'm putting my ass in a sling for you, but lyou're really determined to have an abortion, let's get sever with. I have a doctor friend who owes me a favour-. Hell . . ."
"No."
. He stared at her.
"Larry's not ready yet,1* she said.

' Three weeks later at four o'clock hi the morning, tsatz was awakened by a furious concierge pound on his door. 'Telephone, Monsieur Night Owl!" he "And tell your caller that it is the middle of the , when respectable people are asleep!"
ael stumbled out of bed and sleepily made his way the hall to the telephone, wondering what crisis 1 arisen. He picked up the receiver.
"Israel?"
He did not recognize the voice at the other end of > phone.
«Yesr
"Now ..." It was a whisper, disembodied and anonymous.
"Who is this?"
"Now. Come now, Israel..."
There was an eeriness to the voice, an unearthly quality that sent a chill down his spine. "Noelle?"
"Now . . ."
"For Christ's sake," he exploded. "I won't do it. It's too late. You'll die, and I'm not going to be responsible. Get yourself to a hospital."
There was a click in his ear, and he stood there holding the phone. He slammed the receiver and went back to his room, his mind churning. He knew that he could not do any good now, no one could. She was five and a half months pregnant. He had warned her time and time again, but she had refused to listen. Well, it was her responsibility.. He wanted to have no part of it. He began to dress as fast as he could, his bowels cold with fear.

When Israel Katz walked into her apartment, Noelle was lying on the floor in a pool of blood, hemorrhagng. Her face was dead white, but it showed no sign of the agony that must have been racking her body. She was wearing what appeared to be a wedding dress. Israel knelt at her side. "What happened?" he asked.
"How did--?" He stopped, as his eyes fell on a bloody, twisted wire coat hanger near her feet.
"Jesus Christ!" He was filled with a rage and at the same time a terrible frustrating feeling of helplessness. The blood was pouring out faster now, there was not a moment to lose.

"Ill call an ambulance," and he started to rise.
Noelle reached up and grabbed his arm with surprising strength, and pulled him back down to her.
"Larry's baby is dead," she said, and her face was lit with a beautiful smile.
A team of six doctors worked for five hours trying to «re Noelle's life. The diagnosis was septic poisoning, forated womb, blood poisoning and shock. All the igreed that there was little chance that she live. By six o'clock that night Noelle was out of and two days later, she was sitting up in bed tie to talk. Israel came to see her.
"All the doctors say that it is a miracle you're alive» belle."
She shook her head. It was simply not her time to She had taken her first vengeance on Larry, but it only the beginning. There was more to come, inch more. But first she had to find him. It would take e. But she would do it.

CATHERINE

Chicago: 1939-1940

The growing winds of war that were blowing across Europe were reduced to no more than gentle, warning zephyrs when they reached the shores of the United States.

On the Northwestern campus, a few more boys joined the ROTC, there were student rallies urging President Roosevelt to declare war on Germany and a few seniors enlisted in the Armed Forces. In general, however, the sea of complacency remained the same, and the underground swell that was soon to sweep over the country was barely perceptible.

As she walked to her cashier's job at the Roost that October afternoon, Catherine Alexander wondered whether the war would change her life, if it came. She knew one change that she had to make, and she was determined to do it as soon as possible. She desperately wanted to know what it was like to have a man hold her hi his arms and make love to her, and she knew that she wanted it partly because of her physical needs, but also because she felt she was missing out on an important and wonderful experience. My God, what if she got run over by a car and they did a post mortem on her and discovered she was a virgin! No, she had to do something about it. Now.

Catherine glanced around the Roost carefully, but she did not see the face she was looking for. When

Ron Peterson came in an hour later with Jean-Anne,
Catherine felt her body tingle and her heart begin to

She turned away as they walked past her, and
: of the corner of her eye she saw the two make their
to Ron's booth and sit down. Large banners were
around the room, "TRY OUR DOUBLE
ÏURGER SPECIAL* . . . «TRY OUR
)VER'S DELIGHT" . . . «TRY OUR TRIPLE \L1.n
Catherine took a deep breath and walked over to the
3th. Ron Peterson was studying the menu, trying to he up his mind. "I don't know what I want," he was
ing.
"How hungry are you?" Jean-Anne asked.
«I'm starved."
"Then toy this." They both looked up La surprise. It
Catherine standing over the booth. She handed
: Peterson a folded note, turned around and walked black to the cash register.
Ron opened the note, looked at it and burst into
tighter. Jean-Anne watched him coolly.
"Is it a private joke or can anyone get in on it?"
"Private," Ron grinned. He slipped the note into his
ket
Ron and Jean-Anne left shortly afterward. Ron
lidn't say anything as he paid his check, but he gave Catherine a long, speculative look, smiled and walked
: with Jean-Anne on his arm. Catherine looked after
feeling like an idiot. She didn't even know how
> make a successful pass at a boy.
When her shift was up, Catherine got into her coat,
lid good night to the girl coming in to relieve her and
outside. It was a warm autumn evening with a
aling breeze skipping in off the lake. The sky looked he purple velvet with soft, far-flung stars just out of
It was a perfect evening to--what? Catherine
: a list in her mind.
/ can go home and wash my hair,
can go to the library and study for the Latin exam
1 can go too movie.
I can hide in the bushes and rape the first sailor who
comes along.
I can go get myself committed.
Committed, she decided.
As she started to move along the campus toward the
library, a figure stepped out from behind a lamp post
"Hi, Cathy. Where you headed?"
It was Ron Peterson, smiling down at her, and
Catherine's heart started to pound until it began to
burst out of her chest. She watched as it took off on its
own, beating its way through the air. She became
aware that Ron was staring at her. No wonder. How
many girls did he know who could do that heart trick?

She desperately wanted to comb her hair and fix her
makeup and check the seams of her stockings, but she
tried to let none of her nervousness show. Rule one:
Keep calm.
"Slug," she mumbled.
"Where are you headed?"
Should she give him her list? God, no! He'd think
she was insane. This was her big chance and she must
not do a single thing to destroy it. She looked up at
him, her eyes as warm and inviting as .Carole Lombard's
in Nothing Sacred.
"I didn't have any special plans," she said invitingly.
Ron was studying her, still not sure of her, some primeval
instinct making him cautious. "Would you like to do something special?" he said.
This was it. The Proposition. The point of no return.
"Name it," she said, "and Fm yours." And cringed inwardly.*
It sounded so corny. No one said, "Name it
and I'm yours" except in bad Fannie Hurst novels. He
was going to turn on his heel and walk away in disgust.
But he didn't. Incredibly, he smiled, took her arm
and said, "Let's go."
Catherine walked along with him, stunned. It had
been as simple as that. She was on her way to getting
laid. She began to tremble inside. If he found out she

I a virgin, she would be finished. And what was she no to talk about when she was in bed with him? Did
pie talk when they were actually doing it, or did
wait
until it was over? She didn't want to be rude» a she had no idea what the rules were.
"Have you had dinner?" Ron was asking.
"Dinner?" She stared up at him, trying to think,
hould she have had dinner? If she said yes, then he I'll take her right to bed and she could get it over
"No," she said quickly, "I haven't." Now why did a that? he ruined everything. But Ron did not him upset
"Good. Do you like Chinese food?"
"It's my favorite." She hated it, but the gods eerily
weren't going to count a little yellow lie on the
st night of her life.
"There's a good Chinese joint over on Estes. Lum
pong's. Do you know it?"
No, but she would never forget it as long as she
ed.
What did you do the night you lost your cherry?
Oh, I went to Lum Pong's first and had some
:ese food with Ron Peterson. ji Was it good?
B Sure. But you know Chinese food. An hour later, I
sexy again.

hey had reached his car, a maroon Reo convert-e.
Ron held the door open for Catherine, and she
in the seat where all the other girls she envied had
sat. Ron was charming, handsome, a top athlete,
id a sex maniac. It would make a good title for a
vie. The Sex Maniac and the Virgin. Maybe she
lould have held out for a nicer restaurant like Hen's
hi the Loop and then Ron would have thought, him is the kind of girl I want
to take home to Mother. 'A penny for your thoughts," he said. Oh, great! All
right, so he wasn't the most brilliant
iversationalist in the world. But that wasnt why she
here, was it? She looked up at him sweetly. "I was

just thinking about you." She snuggled against him.

He grinned. "You really had me fooled, Cathy."

"I did?"

"I always thought you were pretty standoffish--I
mean, not interested in men."

The word youire fumbling for is lesbian, Catherine
thought, but aloud she said, "I just like to pick my time
and place."

"I'm glad you picked me."

"So am I." And she was. She really was. She could
be certain that Ron was a good lover. He had been factory-tested
and approved by every horny coed within a
radius of a hundred and fifty miles. It would have been
humiliating to have had her first sexual experience with
someone as ignorant as she was. With Ron she was
getting a master. After tonight she would not be calling
herself Saint Catherine any longer. Instead she would
probably be known as "Catherine the Great." And this
time she would know what the "Great" stood for. She
would be fantastic hi bed. The trick was not to panic.
All the wonderful things she had read about in the little
green books she used to keep hidden from her mother
and father were about to happen to her. Her body was
going to be an organ filled with exquisite music. Oh,
she knew it would hurt the first time; it always did. But
she would not let Ron know. She would move her behind
around a lot because men hated for a woman to
just lie there, motionless. And when Ron penetrated
her, she would bite her lip to conceal the pain and

cover it up with a sexy cry.

"What?"

She turned to Ron, appalled, and realized she had cried aloud. "I--I didn't say anything."

"You gave a kind of funny cry."

"Did I?" She forced a little laugh.

"You're a million miles away."

She analyzed the line and decided it was bad. She must be more like Jean-Anne. Catherine put her hand

his arm and moved closer. "I'm right here," she
^d.
She tried to make her voice throaty, like Jean Arthur I Calamity Jane. Ron looked down at her, confused, but the only
no he could read in her face was an eager warmth.
Lum Pong's was a dreary-looking, run-ofthe-mill
aese restaurant located under the Elevated. All
ugh dinner they could hear the rumble of the trains
they ran overhead rattling the dishes. The restaurant
like a thousand other anonymous Chinese res-all
over America, but Catherine carefully ab-the
details of the booth they were seated in,
to memory the cheap, spotted wallpaper,
chipped china teapot, the soy-sauce stains on the
We.
A little Chinese waiter came up to the table and
if they wanted a drink. Catherine had tasted
key a few tunes hi her life and hated it, but this
New Year's Eve, the Fourth of July, the End of
: Maidenhood. It was fitting to celebrate.
"Ill have an old-fashioned with a cherry hi ft."
y/ Oh, God! It was a dead giveaway.
"Scotch and soda," Ron said.
The waiter bowed himself away from the table, ierine wondered if it were true that Oriental
omen were built slantwise.
"I don't know why we never became friends before,"
was saying. "Everyone says you're the brightest
[in the whole goddamned university."
"You know how people exaggerate."
"And you're damned pretty."
"Thank you." She tried to make her voice sound like ierine Hepburn in Alice Adams and looked meanly
into his eyes. She was no longer Catherine
She was a sex machine. She was about to
Mae West, Marlene Dietrich, Cleopatra. They ' all going to be sisters under the foreskin.>

The waiter brought the drink and she finished it in one quick nervous gulp. Ron watched her hi surprise. "Easy," he warned. «That's pretty potent stuff."
"I can handle it," Catherine assured him, confidently.
"Another round," he told the waiter. Ron reached across the table and caressed her hand. "It's funny. Everybody at school had you wrong."
"Wrong. No one at school's had me."
He stared at her. Careful, don't be clever. Men preferred to bed girls who had excessively large mammary glands and gluteus maximus muscles and exceedingly small cerebrums.
"I've had a--thing for you for a long time," she said, hurriedly.
"You sure kept it a secret." Ron pulled out the note she had written and smoothed it out "Try our Cashier," he read aloud, and laughed. "So far I like it better than the Banana Split" He ran his hands up and down Catherine's arm and his touch sent tiny ripples down her spine, just like the books said it would. Perhaps after tonight she would write a manual on sex to instruct all the poor, dumb virgins who didn't know what life was all about. After the second drink Catherine was beginning to feel sorry for them.
"It's a pity."
"What's a pity?"
She had spoken aloud again. She decided to be bold.
"I was feeling sorry for all the virgins in the world," she said.
Ron grinned at Catherine. "Ill drink to that." He lifted his glass. She looked at him sitting across from her obviously enjoying her company. She had nothing to worry about. Everything was going beautifully. He asked if she would like another drink, but Catherine declined. She did not intend to be in an alcoholic stupor when she was deflowered. Deflowered? Did people situ use words like deflowered? Anyway, she wanted to remember every moment, every sensation. Oh, my

' She wasn't wearing anything! Would he? Surely a : as experienced as Ron Peterson would have some-to put on, some protection so she wouldn't get
What if he was expecting the same thing?
if he was thinking that a girl as experienced as tthertne Alexander would surely have some protec-Could she come right out and ask him? She de-ied that she would rather die first, right at the table, they could cany her body away and give her a cere-jnial Chinese burial.
Ron ordered the dollar seventy-five six-course dinner, and Catherine pretended to eat it, but it might as

have been Chinese cardboard. She was beginning him get so tense she couldn't taste anything. Her tongue
suddenly dry and the roof of her mouth felt
ngely numb. What if she had just had a stroke? If
had sex right after a stroke, it would probably kill
Perhaps she should warn Ron. It would hurt his
if they found a dead girl in his bed. Or maybe it would enhance it
"What's the matter?" Ron asked. "You look pale."
"I feel great," Catherine said, recklessly. Tm just
1 about being with you."
Ron looked at her approvingly, his brown eyes tak-;
in every detail of her face and moving down to her
jpbreasts and lingering there. "I feel the same way," he
replied.
The waiter had taken the dishes away, and Ron had
[paid the check. He looked at her, but Catherine
I couldn't move.
"Do you want anything else?" Ron asked.
ft Do I? Oh, yes! 1 want to be on a slow boat to China.
I want to be him» a cannibal's kettle being boiled for dinner. one want my mother!
Ron was watching her, waiting. Catherine took a
deep breath. '1--I can't think of anything."
"Good." He drew the syllable out, long and lastingly
$o that it seemed to put a bed on the table between
them. "Let's go." He stood up and Catherine followed.

The euphoric feeling from the drinks had completely
vanished and her legs began to tremble.

They were outside in the warm night air when a sudden
thought hit Catherine and filled her with relief. He's not going to take me to bed tonight. Men never
do that -with a girl on the first date. He's going to ask
me out to dinner again and next time -we'll go to Hen-ricfs
and we'll get to know each other better. Really
know each other. And we'll probably fall in love-- madly--and he'll take me to meet Ms parents and then
everything will be all right . . . and I won't feel this
stupid panic.

"Do you have any preference in motels?" Ron
asked.

Catherine stared up at him, speechless. Gone were
the dreams of a genteel musicale evening with his
mother and father. The bastard was planning to take
her to bed in a motel! Well, that was what she wanted,

wasn't it? Wasn't that the reason she had written that insane note?

Ron's hand was on Catherine's shoulder now, sliding down her arm. She felt a warm sensation in her groin. She swallowed and said, "If you've seen one motel, you've seen them all."

Ron looked at her strangely. But all he said was, «OK. Let's go."

They got into his car and started driving west Catherine's body had turned into a block of ice, but her mind was racing at a feverish pitch. The last time she had stayed in a motel was when she was eight and was driving across country with her mother and father. Now she was going to one to go to bed with a man who was a total stranger. What did she know about him anyway? Only that he was handsome, popular and knew an easy lay when he saw one.

Ron reached over and took her hand. "Your hands are cold," he said.

"Cold hands* hot legs." Oh, Christ, she thought. There I go again. For some reason, the lyrics of "Ah,

Mystery of Life" started to go through Cather's head. Well she was about to solve it. She was on way to finding out what everything was all about books, the sexy advertisements, the thinly veiled I lyrics--"Rock Me in the Cradle of Love," "Do It
"Birds Dp It." OK, she thought. Now Gather is going to do it.
Ron turned south onto Clark Street. 1 Ahead on both sides of the street were huge blinking
eyes, neon signs that were alive hi the night,
out their offers of cheap and temporary
Bvens for impatient young lovers. "EASY REST MO
"OVERNIGHT MOTEL," "COME INN," Vow that had to be Freudian!) "TRAVELER'S
." The paucity of imagination was staggering, but
the other hand the owners of these places were
obably too busy bustling fornicating young couples him and out of bed to worry about being literary.
"This is about the best of them," Ron said, pointing him a sign ahead.
"PARADISE INN--VACANCY."
It was a symbol. There was a vacancy in Paradise,
ad she, Catherine Alexander, was going to fill it
Ron swung the car into the courtyard next to a
lall whitewashed office with a sign that read: RING
AND ENTER. The courtyard consisted of
aut two dozen numbered wooden bungalows.
"How does this look?" Ron asked. Like Dante's Inferno. Like the Colosseum in Rome when the Christians were about to be thrown to 1he

ons. Like the Temple of Delphi when a Vestal Virgin |wor about to get hers,
Catherine felt that excited feeling in her groin again.
Terrific," she said, "Just terrific."
Ron smiled knowingly. "I'll be right back." He put
hand on Catherine's knee, sliding it up toward her
iigh, gave her a quick, impersonal kiss and swung out
' the car and went into the office. She sat there, look-ling
after him, trying to make her mind blank.
She heard the wail of a siren in the distance. Oh, my
God, she thought wildly, if3 a read! They're always
raiding these places!
The door to the manager's office opened and Ron
came out. He was carrying a key and apparently was
deaf to the siren which was coming closer and closer.
He walked over to Catherine's side of the car and
opened the door.
"All set," he said. The siren was a screaming banshee
moving hi on them. Could the police arrest them
for merely being hi the courtyard?
"Come on," Ron said
"Don't you hear that?"
"Hear what?"
The siren passed them and went ululating down the
street away from them, receding into the distance.
Damn! "The birds," she said weakly.
There was a look of impatience on Ron's face.
"If there's anything wrong--" he said.
"No, no," Catherine cut in quickly. "I'm coming."
She got out of the car and they moved toward one of
the bungalows. "I hope you got my lucky number," she
said brightly.
"What did you say?"
Catherine looked up at him and suddenly realized no
words had come out. Her mouth was completely dry.
"Nothing," she croaked.
They reached the door and it said number thirteen.
It was exactly what she deserved. It was a sign from
heaven that she was going to get pregnant, that God
was out to punish Saint Catherine.
Ron unlocked the door and held it open for her. He
flicked on the light switch and Catherine stepped inside.
She could not believe it. The room seemed to consist
of one enormous bed. The only other furniture was
an uncomfortable-looking easy chair in a corner, a
small dressing table with a mirror over it, and next to
the bed, a battered radio with a slot for feeding it quarters.
No one would ever walk hi here and mistake this
for anything but what it was: a place where a
brought a girl to screw her. You couldn't say,
here we are hi the ski lodge, or the war games
or the bridal suite at the Ambassador. No.
: this was was a cheap love nest Catherine turned
see what Ron was doing and he was throwing the

on the door. Good. If the Vice Squad wanted
em, they'd have to break down the door first. She I'll see herself being carried out in the nude by two
blicemen while a photographer snapped her picture for
|e front page of the Chicago Daily News. Ron moved up to Catherine and put his arms
ad her. "Are you nervous?" he asked.
She looked up at him and forced a laugh that would have made Margaret Sullavan proud. "Nervous? Ron, wasn't be silly.!'
He was still studying her, unsure. "You've done this
fore, havent you, Cathy?"
"I don't keep a scorecard." "I've had a strange feeling about you all evening." Here it comes. He was going to throw her out on her
%in ass and tell her to get lost in a cold shower.
jjrVell, she wasn't going to let that happen. Not tonight. "What kind of feeling?"
"I don't know." Ron's voice was perplexed. "One
lute you're kind of sexy and, you know, with it, and
tie next minute your mind is way off somewhere and away as frigid as ice. It's like you're two people.
" him one is the real Catherine Alexander?" Frigid as ice, she automatically said to herseli
| Aloud she said, 'till show you." She put her arms
I around him and kissed him on the lips and she could
ISmell egg foo young.
|! He kissed her harder and pulled her close to him. He
|ran his hands over her breasts, caressing them, pushing
tongue into her mouth. Catherine felt a hot moisfcnre
deep down inside her and she could feel her pants Here I go, she thought. It's really going to
ripen! Ifs really going to happen! She clung to him
harder, filled with a growing, almost unbearable excitement
"Let's get undressed," Ron said hoarsely. He stepped
back from her and started to take off his jacket.
"No," she said. "Let me." There was a new confidence
in her voice. If this was the night of nights, she
was going to do it right. She was going to remember
everything she had ever read or heard. Ron wasn't
going back to school to snicker to the girls about how
he had made love to a dumb little virgin. Catherine
might not have Jean-Anne's bust measurement, but she
had a brain ten times as useful, and she was going to
put it to work to make Ron so happy in bed he
wouldn't be able to stand it She took off his jacket and
laid it on the bed, then reached for his tie.
"Hold it," Ron said. "I want to see you undress,"
Catherine stared at him, swallowed, slowly reached
for her zipper and got out of her dress. She was standing
hi her bra, slip, pants, shoes and stockings.
"Goon."
She hesitated a moment, then reached down and
stepped out of her slip. Lions, 2--Christians, 0, she
thought

"Hey, great! Keep going."
Catherine slowly sat down on the bed and carefully removed her shoes and stockings, trying to make it look as sexy as she could. Suddenly she felt Ron behind her, undoing her bra. She let it fall to the bed. He lifted Catherine to her feet and started sliding her pants down. She took a deep breath and closed her eyes, wishing that she were in another place with another man, a human being who loved her, whom she loved, who would father splendid children to bear his name,
who would fight for her and kill for her and for whom she would be an adoring helpmate. A whore in his bed, a great cook in his kitchen, a charming hostess in his living room, . . a man who would kill a son of a bitch like Ron Peterson for daring to bring her to this tacky,
91

room. Hex pants fell to the floor. Catherine opened her eyes.
[Ron was staring at her, his face filled with admira-"My God, Cathy, you're beautiful," he said, you're really beautiful." He bent down and kissed her
east. She caught a glimpse in the dressing-table mir-It looked like a French farce, sordid and dirty. Ev inside her except the hot pain in her groin told that this was dreary and ugly and wrong, but there no way to stop it now. Ron was whipping off his and unbuttoning his shirt, his face flushed. He undid belt and stripped down to his shorts, then sat down , the bed and started to take off his shoes and socks, mean it, Catherine," he said, his voice tight with action. "You're the most beautiful goddamn thing I ever laid eyes, on."
,His words only increased Catherine's panic. Ron up, a broad, anticipatory grin on his face, and let shorts drop to the floor. His male organ was stand-ag out stiffly, like an enormous, inflated salami with around it. It was the largest, most incredible thing ierine had ever seen in her life.
"How do you like that?" he said, looking down at it Hy.
Without thinking, Catherine said, "Sliced on rye. aid the mustard and lettuce."
And she stood there, watching it go down.

In Catherine's sophomore year there was a change I'll the atmosphere of the campus.
For the first time there was a growing concern about what was happening in Europe and an increasing feel-that America was going to get involved. Hitler's of the thousand-year rule of the Third Reich on its way to becoming a reality. The Nam had upied Denmark and invaded Norway.

Over the past six months the talk on campuses
the country had shifted from sex and clothes

and proms to the ROTC and the draft and lend-lease.
More and more college boys were appearing in army
and navy uniforms.
One day Susie Roberts, a classmate from Senn,
stopped Catherine in the corridor. "I want to say
good-bye, Cathy. I'm leaving."
"Where are you going?"
"The Klondike."
TheKlondiker
"Washington, D.C. All the girls are striking gold
there. They say for every girl there are at least a hundred
men. I like those odds." She looked at Catherine.
"What do you want to stick around this place for?
School's a drag. There's a whole big world waiting out
there."
"I can't leave just now," Catherine said. She was not
sure why: She had no real ties in Chicago. She corresponded
regularly with her father in Omaha and talked
to him on the telephone once or twice a month and
each time he sounded as though he were in prison.
Catherine was on her own now. The more she
thought about Washington, the more exciting it
seemed. That evening she phoned her father and told
Mm she wanted to quit school and go to work in Washington.
He asked her if she would like to come to
Omaha, but Catherine could sense the reluctance in his
voice. He did not want her to be trapped, as he had
been.
The next morning Catherine went to the dean of
women and informed her she was quitting school.
Catherine sent a telegram to Susie Roberts and the
next day she was on a train to Washington, D.C
Noelle
Paris: 1940

^Saturday, June 14, 1940, the German Fifth Army
lied into a stunned Pans. The Maginot Line had
out to be the biggest fiasco in the history of
and France lay defenseless before one of the
powerful military machines the world had ever
r|Q«
hie day had begun with a strange gray pall that lay
the city, a terrifying cloud of unknown origin. For him last forty-eight
hours sounds of intermittent gunfire
broken the unnatural, frightened silence of Paris,
roar of the cannons was outside the city, but the
does reverberated into the heart of Paris. There had
a flood of rumors carried like a tidal wave over
radio, in newspapers and by word of mouth. The
were invading the French coast . . . London

been destroyed . . . Hitler had reached an accord
«tth the British government . . . The Germans were trying to wipe out Paris with a deadly new bomb. At
st each rumor had been taken as gospel, creating its
panic, but constant crises finally exert a soporific ïect, as though the mind and body, unable to absorb
ny further terror, retreat into a protective shell of apa-Now
the rumor mills had ground to a complete
Jt, newspaper presses had stopped printing and radio stations had stopped broadcasting. Human instinct had
ten over from the machines, and the Parisians sensed
jat this was a day of decision. The gray cloud was an

And then the German locusts began to swarm in.

Suddenly Paris was a city filled with foreign uniforms
and alien people, speaking a strange, guttural
tongue, speeding down the wide, tree-lined avenues hi
large Mercedes limousines flying Nazi flags or pushing
their way along the sidewalks that now belonged to
them. They were truly the liber Mensch, and it was
their destiny to conquer and rule the world.
Within two weeks an amazing transformation had
taken place. Signs hi German appeared everywhere.
Statues of French heroes had been knocked down and
the swastika flew from all state buildings. German efforts
to eradicate everything Gallic reached ridiculous
proportions. The markings on hot and cold water taps
were changed from chaud and froid to heiss and kali. The place de Broglie in Strasbourg became Adolf Hitler
Platz. Statues of Lafayette, Key and Kleber were
dynamited by squadrons of Nazis. Inscriptions on the
monuments for the dead were replaced by "GEFALEN
FUR DEUTSCHLAND."
The German occupation troops were enjoying themselves.
While French food was too rich and covered
with too many sauces, it was still a pleasant change
from war rations. The soldiers neither knew nor cared
that Paris was the city of Baudelaire, Dumas and
Moliere. To them Paris was a garish, eager, overpaintd
whore with her skirts pulled up over her hips and
they raped her, each in his own way. The Storm-troopers
forced young French girls to go to bed with them,
sometimes at the point of a bayonet, while their leaders
like Goering and Himmler raped the Louvre and the
rich private estates they greedily confiscated from the
newly created enemies of the Reich.
If French corruption and opportunism rose to the
surface hi the time of France's crisis, so did the heroism.
One of the underground's secret weapons was
the Pompiers, the fire department, which hi France is
under the jurisdiction of the army. The Germans had

ted dozens of buildings for the use of the army, him Gestapo and various ministries, and the location of
buildings was of course no secret. At an under-resistance headquarters in St. Remy resistance
pored over large maps detailing the location of him building. Experts were then assigned their targets,
the following day a speeding car or an innocent-bicyclist would pass by one of the buildings
fling a homemade bomb through the window. Up
that point the damage was slight. The ingenuity of I plan lay in what followed next.
him Germans would call in the Pompiers to put out
fire. Now it is instinctive in all countries that when
is a conflagration the firemen are in complete
barge: And so it was in Paris. The Pompiers raced him the building while the Germans stood meekly aside
watched them destroy everything hi sight with
li-pressure hoses, axes and--when the opportunity wanted itself--their own incendiary bombs. In this
ay the underground managed to destroy priceless
jerman records locked away in the fortresses of the
fehrmacht and the Gestapo. It took almost six months
the German high command to figure out what was
and by that time irreparable damage had
done. The Gestapo could prove nothing, but ev-member
of the Pompiers was rounded up and sent him the Russian front to fight.
There was a shortage of everything from food to
Isoap. There was no gasoline, no meat, no dairy products.
The Germans had confiscated everything. Stores
I that carried luxury goods stayed open, but their only
were the soldiers who paid hi occupation
which were identical with the regular marks except
that they lacked the white strip at the edge and the
printed promise to pay was not signed.
"Who will redeem these?" the Preach shopkeepers
1 moaned.
And the Germans grinned, "The Bank of England."
Not all Frenchmen suffered, however. For those

with money and connections there was always the
Black Market

Noelle Page's life was changed very little by the occupation.
She was working as a model at Chanel's on
rue Canbon in a hundred-and-fifty-year-old graystone
building that looked ordinary on the outside, but was
very smartly decorated within. him war, like all wars,
had created overnight millionaires, and there was no

shortage of customers. The propositions that came to
Noelle were more numerous than ever; the only difference
was that most of them were now in German.
When she was not working, she would sit for hours at
small outdoor cafes on the Champs-Êlysées, or on the
Left Bank near the Pont Neuf. There were hundreds of
men in German uniforms, many of them with young
French girls. The French civilian men were either too
old or lame, and Noelle supposed that the younger
ones had been sent to camps or conscripted for military
duty. She could tell the Germans at a glance, even
when they were not hi uniform. They had a look of arrogance
stamped on their faces, the look that conquerors
have had since the days of Alexander and
Hadrian. Noelle did not hate them, nor did she like
them. They simply did not touch her.
She was filled with a busy inner life, carefully planning
out each move. She knew exactly what her goal
was, and she knew that nothing could stop her. As
soon as she was able to afford it, she engaged a private
detective who had handled a divorce for a model with
whom she worked. The detective's name was Christian
Barbet, and he operated out of a small, shabby office
on the rue St Lazare. The sign on the door read:

ENQUÊTES
PRIVÊES FT COMMERCIALS
RECHERCHES
RENSEIGNEMENTS

CONHDENTffiLS
FILATURES
PREUVES

sign was almost larger than the office. Barbet was
and bald with yellow, broken teeth, narrow
: eyes and nicotine-stained fingers,
hat can I do for you?" he asked Noelle.
[want information about someone in England."
le blinked suspiciously. "What kind of mforma?" "Anything. Whether he's married, who he sees. Any
at all. I want to start a scrapbook on him."
Jarbet gingerly scratched his crotch and stared at

I "Is he an Englishman?"
Y*An American. He's a pilot with the Eagle Squadron
ftheRAF."
IsBarbet rubbed the top of his head» uneasily. "I
nt know," he grumbled. 'We're at war. they they
me trying to get information out of England a «flyer--"
His voice trailed off and he shrugged expressively.

Germans shoot first and .ask questions after

"I don't want any military information," Noelle as-l
him. She opened her purse and took out a wad of
: notes. Barbet studied them hungrily.
"I have connections in England," he said cautiously,
ut it will be expensive."
And so it began. It was three months before the little
tive telephoned Noelle. She went to his office, and to first words were: "Is he alive?" and when Barbet
her body sagged with relief and Barbet
but, It must be wonderful to have someone have
him to much,
"Your boyfriend has been transferred," Barbet told
"Where?"
He looked down at a pad on his desk. "He was attached
to the 609th Squadron of the RAF. He's been
transferred to the 121st Squadron at Martlesham East,
in East Anglia. He's flying Hurri--*
"I don't care about that."
"You're paying for it," he said. "You might as well
get your money's worth." He looked down at his notes
again. "He's flying Hurricanes. Before that he was
flying American Buffaloes."
He turned over a page and added, "It becomes a little
personal here."
"Go on," Noelle said.
Barbel shrugged. "There's a list of girls he is sleeping
with. I didn't know whether you wanted--"
"I told you--everything."
There was a strange note in her voice that baffled
him. There was something not quite normal here,
something that did not ring true. Christian Barbet was
a third-rate investigator handling third-rate clients, but
because of that he had developed a feral instinct for
truth, a nose for smelling out facts. The beautiful girl
standing in his office disturbed him. At first Barbet had
thought she might be trying to involve him in some
kind of espionage. Then he decided that she was a
deserted wife seeking evidence against her husband. He
had been wrong about that, he admitted, and now he
was at a loss to figure out what his client wanted or
why. He handed Noelle the list of Larry Douglas' girl
friends and watched her face as she read it She might
have been reading a laundry list.
She finished and looked up. Christian Barbet was totally
unprepared for her next words. "I'm very
pleased," Noelle said.
He looked at her and blinked rapidly,
"Please call me when you have something more to
report."
Long after Noelle Page had gone, Barbet sat in his
staring out the window, trying to puzzle oat what him client was really
after.

The theaters of Paris were beginning to boom again.
Germans attended to celebrate the glory of their
Mies and to show off the beautiful Frenchwomen
wore on their arms like trophies. The French at-to
forget for a few hours that they were an UN,
defeated people.
Noelle had attended the theater in Marseille a few
ties, but she had seen sleazy amateur plays acted out
fourth-rate performers for indifferent audiences,
theater in Paris was something else again. It was
and sparkling and filled with the wit and grace of
loliëre, Racine and Colette. The incomparable Sacha
oitry had opened, his theater and Noelle went to see
perform. She attended a revival of Buchner"s La
forte de Danton and a play caHed Asmodée by a
promising new young writer named Francois Mauriac.
tie went to the Comédie Francaise to see Pirandello's lhacun La Velite and
Rostand's Cyrano de Bergerac. Noelle always went alone, oblivious of the
admiring
of those around her, completely lost in the
la taking place on the stage. Something hi the
Imagic that went on behind the footlights struck a re-sive
chord in her. She was playing a part just like
|the actors on stage, pretending to be something that
[the wasn't, hiding behind a mask.
One play in particular, Huis Clos by Jean Paul Sar<tre,
affected her deeply. It starred Philippe Sorel, one
: the idols of Europe. Sorel was ugly, short and beefy,
Iwith a broken nose and the face of a boxer. But the
he spoke, a magic took place. He was trans-into
a sensitive handsome man. It's tike the jf story of the Prince and the Frog,
Noelle thought, him perform. Only he is both. She went back
to watch him again and again, sitting in the front row
lying his performance, trying to learn the secret of
Ibis magnetism.
One evening during intermission an usher handed
Noelle a note. It read, "I have seen you in the audience
night after night. Please come backstage this evening
and let me meet you. P.S." Noelle read it over, savoring
it. Not because she gave a damn about Philippe
Sorel, but because she knew that this was the beginning
she had been looking for.
She went backstage after the performance. An old
man at the stage door ushered her into Sorel's dressing
room. He was seated before a makeup mirror, wearing
only shorts, wiping off his makeup. He studied Noelle
in the mirror. "It's unbelievable," he said finally.
"You're even more beautiful up close."
"Thank you, Monsieur Sorel."
"Where are you from?"
"Marseille."
Sorel swung around to look at her more closely. His

eyes moved to her feet and slowly worked their way up to the top of her head, missing nothing. Noelle stood there under his scrutiny, not moving. "Looking for a job?" he asked.
"No."
"I never pay for it," Sorel said. "AH you'll get from me is a pass to my play. If you want money, fuck a banker."
Noelle stood there quietly watching him. Finally Sorel said, "What are you looking for?"
"I think I'm looking for you."
They had supper and afterward went back to Sorel's apartment in the beautiful rue Maurice-Barres, overlooking the corner where it became the Bois de Boulogne. Philippe Sorel was a skillful lover, surprisingly considerate and unselfish. Sorel had expected nothing from Noelle but her beauty, and he was astonished by her versatility hi bed.
"Christt" he said. "You're fantastic. Where did you learn all that?"
Noelle thought about it a moment It was really not

ion of learning. It was a matter of feeling. To a a man's body was an instrument to be played on, to
plore to its innermost depths, finding the responsive and building upon them, using her own body to
|p create exquisite harmonies.
|1rï was born with it," she said simply.
fingertips began to lightly play around his lips, little butterfly touches, and then moved down to chest and stomach. She saw him starting to grow and erect again. She arose and went into the and returned a moment later and slid his penis into her mouth. Her mouth was hot, filled a warm water.
* "Oh, Christ," he said.
I'll They spent the entire night making love, and in the
, Sore! invited Noelle to move in with him.

'Noelle lived with Philippe Sorel for six months. She neither happy nor unhappy. She knew that her
_ there made Sorel ecstatically happy, but this did matter hi the slightest to Noelle. She regarded her-as simply a student, determined to learn something a every day. He was a school that she was attending,
small part in her large plan. To Noelle there was tiing personal in their relationship, for she gave of herself. She had made that mistake twice, she would never make it again. There was room only one man in Noelle's thoughts and that was Douglas. Noelle would pass the place they Vic-or a park or restaurant where Larry had taken a, and she would feel the hatred

well up within her,
aking her, so it became difficult to breathe, and there
something else mixed in with the hatred, some-rig
Noelle could not put a name to.
*' Two months after moving in with Sorel, Noelle re
a call from Christian BarbeL
"I have another report for you," the little detective
"Is he all right?" Noelle asked quickly.
Again Barbel was filled with that sense of uneasiness.
"Yes," he said
NoeUe's voice was filled with relief. 'till be right
down." v
The report was divided into two parts. The first dealt
with Larry Douglas' military career. He had shot down
five German planes and was the first American to become
an Ace in the war. He had been promoted to
Captain. The second part of the report interested her
more. He had become very popular in London's wartime
social life and had become engaged to the daughter
of a British Admiral. There followed a list of girls
that Larry was sleeping with, ranging from show girls
to the wife of an under-secretary in the Ministry.
"Do you want me to keep on with this?" Barbet
asked.
"Of course," Noelle replied. She took an envelope
from her purse and handed it to Barbet, "Call me when
you have anything further."
And she was gone.
Barbet sighed and looked up at the ceiling. "Folle," he said thoughtfully.
"Fotte."

If Philippe Sorel had had any inkling of what was
going on in Noelle's mind, he would have been astonished.
Noelle seemed totally devoted to him. She did
everything for him: cooked wonderful meals, shopped,
supervised the cleaning of his apartment and made love
whenever the mood stirred him. And asked for nothing.
Sorel congratulated himself on having found the
perfect mistress. He took her everywhere, and she met
all his friends. They were enchanted with her and
thought Sorel a very lucky man.
One night as they were having supper (after the
show, Noelle said to him, "I want to be an actress,
Philippe."
He shook his head. "God knows you're beautiful
enough, Noelle, but I've been up to my ass in actresses
[my life. You're different, and I want to keep you
way. I don't want to share you with anyone." He
her hand. "Don't I give you everything you

[""Yes, Philippe," Noelle replied.
When they returned to the apartment that night,
wanted to make love. When they finished, he was

iied. Noelle had never been as exciting, and Sorel
ulated himself that all she needed was the firm
aidance of a man.
The following Sunday was Noelle's birthday, and
llippe Sorel gave a dinner party for her at Maxim's,
had taken over the large private dining room up-decorated
with plush red velvet and deep dark
paneling. Noelle had helped write the guest list,
id there was. one name she included without mention
ft to Philippe. There were forty people at the party.
bey toasted Noelle's birthday and gave her lavish
When dinner was over, Sorel rose to his feet. He
drunk a good deal of brandy and champagne and
tie was a little unsteady, his words a bit slurred.
"My friends," he said, "we've all drunk to the most
íbeautiful girl in the world and we've given her lovely
fbirthday presents, but I have a present for her that's
I going to be a big surprise." Sorel looked down at No-'elle
and beamed, then turned to the crowd. "Noelle
'. and I are going to be married."
There was an approving cheer and the guests raced
' up to clap Sorel on the back and wish luck to the no bride-to-be. Noelle sat there smiling up at the guests, on murmuring her thank-yous. One of the guests bad not
3 risen. He was seated at a table at the far end of the a room, smoking a cigarette in a long holder and viewing
the scene sardonically. Noelle was aware that he had
been watching her during dinner. He was a tall, very
thin man, with an intense, brooding face. He seemed
amused by everything that was happening around bun*
more an observer at the party than a guest
Noelle caught his eye and smiled.

Armand Gautier was one of the top directors in
France. He was in charge of the French Repertory
Theater, and his productions had been acclaimed all
over the world. Having Gautier direct a play or a motion
picture was an almost certain guarantee of its success.
He had the reputation of being particularly good
with actresses and had created half a dozen important
stars.

Sorel was at Noelle's side, talking to her. "Were you
surprised, my darling?" he asked.

"Yes, Philippe," she said.

"I want us to be married right away. Well have the
wedding at my villa."

Over his shoulder Noelle could see Armand Gautier watching her, smiling that enigmatic smile. Some friends came and took Philippe away and when Noelle turned, Gautier was standing there.

"Congratulations," he said. There was a mocking note in his voice. "You hooked a big fish."

"Did I?"

"Philippe Sorel is a great catch."

"For someone perhaps," Noelle said indifferently.

Gautier looked at her in surprise. "Are you trying to tell me you're not interested?"

"I'm not trying to tell you anything."

"Good luck." He turned to go.

"Monsieur Gautier..."

He stopped.

"Could I see you tonight?" Noelle asked quietly. "I would like to talk to you alone."

Armand Gautier looked at her for a moment, then shrugged. "If you wish."

"I will come to your place. Will that be satisfactory?"

"Yes, of course. The address is--"

"I know the address. Twelve o'clock?"

«Twelve o'clock."

1

Armand Gautier lived in a fashionable old apart building on rue Marbeuf. A doorman escorted
He into the lobby and an elevator boy took her to ; fourth floor and indicated Gautier's apartment No-rang
the bell. A few moments later the door was need by Gautier. He wore a flowered dressing gown.
"Come in," he said.
Noelle walked into the apartment Her eye was untied,
but she sensed that it was done in beautiful
ste and that the objets d'art were valuable.

"Sorry I'm not dressed," Gautier apologized. "I've
him on the telephone."
Noelle's eyes locked onto his. "It will not be neces-for
you to be dressed." She moved over to the
ouch and sat down.
Gautier smiled. "That was the feeling I had, Miss
But .I'm curious about something. Why me?
I You're engaged to a man who is famous and wealthy. I
lam sure that if you are looking for some extracurricu;
lar activities, you could find men more attractive than
I, and certainly richer and younger. What is it you on want from me?"
"I want you to teach me to act," Noelle said.
Armand Gautier looked at her a moment, then I sighed. "You disappoint me. I expected something
, more original."
' "Your business is working with actors."
"With actors, not amateurs. Have you ever acted?"
"No. But you will teach me." She took off her hat
and her gloves. "Where is your bedroom?" she asked.
Gautier hesitated. His life was full of beautiful
women wanting to be hi the theater, or wanting a big
ger part, or the lead in a new play, or a larger dressing
room. They were all a pain. He knew that he would be
a fool to get involved with one more. And yet there
was no need to get involved. Here was a beautiful girl
throwing herself at him. It would be a simple matter to
take her to bed and then send her away. "In there," he
said, indicating a door.
He watched Noelle as she walked toward the bed*
room. He wondered what Philippe Sord would think if
he knew that his bride-to-be was spending the night
here. Women. Whores, all of them. Gautier poured
himself a brandy and made several phone calls. When
he finally went into the bedroom, Noelle was in his
bed, naked, waiting for him. Gautier had to admit that
she was an exquisite work of nature. Her face was
breathtaking, and her body was flawless. Her skin was
the color of honey, except for the triangle of soft
golden hair between her legs. Gautier had learned from
experience that beautiful girls were almost invariably
narcissistic, so preoccupied with their own egocentrici-ties
that they were lousy lays. They felt then-contribution to lovemaking was simply conferring their
presence in a man's bed, so that the man ended up
making love to an unmoving lump of clay and was expected
to be grateful for the experience. Ah, well, perhaps
he could teach this one something.
As Noelle watched him, Gautier undressed, leaving
his clothes carelessly strewn on the floor, and moved
toward the bed. "I'm not going to tell you you are
beautiful," he said. "You've heard it too many times
already."
"Beauty is wasted," Noelle shrugged, "unless it is used to give pleasure."

Gautier looked at her in quick surprise, then smiled.
"I agree. Let's use yours." He sat down beside her.
Like most Frenchmen, Armand Gautier prided himself on being a skilled lover. He was amused by the stories he had heard of Germans and Americans whose idea of making love consisted of jumping on top of a girl, having an instant orgasm, and then putting on their hat and departing. The Americans even had a phrase for it, "Wham, bam, thank you ma'am." When Armánd Gautier was emotionally involved with a woman, he used many devices to heighten the enjoyment of lovemaMng. There was always a perfect dinner, the right wines. He arranged the setting artistically so that it was pleasing to the senses, the room was heavily scented and soft music was playing. He his women with tender sentiments of love and the coarse language of the gutter. And Gautier a adept at the manual foreplay that preceded sex.
.< In Noelle's case he dispensed with all of these. For a -night stand there was no need for perfume or moor empty endearments. She was here simply to get
She was indeed a silly fool if she thought that she go trade what every woman in the world carried be her legs for the great and unique genius that At» 1 Gautier possessed hi his head.
He started to climb on top of her. NoeHe stopped im.
"Wait," she whispered.
' As he watched, puzzled, she reached for two small ubes that she had placed on the bedside table. She the contents of one into her hand and began rub it onto his penis.
"What is this all about?" he asked.
She smiled. "You'll see." She kissed Mm on the lips, , her tongue darting into his mouth in quick birdlike ^movements. She pulled away and her tongue started Amoving toward his belly, her hair trailing across his ' body like light, sflky fingers. He felt his organ begin to rise. She moved her tongue down his legs to his feet I «and began to suck gently on his toes. His organ was stiff and hard now and she mounted him as he lay there. As he felt himself penetrating her, the Warmth of her vagina acted on the cream she had put on his penis and the sensation became unbearably exciting. As she rode him, moving up and down, her left hand was caressing his testicles and they began to grow hot
There was menthol in the cream on his penis and the sensation of the cold while inside her warmth, and the heat of his testicles, drove bun into an absolute frenzy.
They made love all night long and each time Noelle made love to him differently. It was the most incredibly sensuous experience he had ever had.
la the morning Armand Gautier said, "If I can get

up enough energy to move, I'll get dressed aad take
you out to breakfast"
"Lie there," Noelle said. She walked over to a closet,
selected one of his robes and put it on. "You rest. I'll
be back."
Thirty-five minutes later Noelle returned with a
breakfast tray. On it were freshly squeezed orange
juice, a delicious sausage-and-chive omelet, heated,
buttered croissants and jam and a pot of black coffee.
It tasted extraordinarily good.
"Aren't you having anything?" Gautier asked.
Noelle shook her head. "No." She was seated hi an
easy chair watching him as he ate. She looked even
more beautiful wearing his dressing gown open at the
top, revealing the curves of her delicious breasts. Her
hair was tousled and carefree.
Armand Gautier had radically revised his earlier estimate
of Noelle. She was not any man's quick lay; she
was an absolute treasure. However, he had met many
treasures in his career in the theater, and he was not
about to spend his time and talent as a director on a
starry-eyed amateur who wanted to break into the theater,
no matter how beautiful she might be, or how
skilled in bed. Gautier was a dedicated man who took
his art seriously. He had refused to compromise it in
the past, and he was not about to start now.
The evening before, he had planned to spend the
night with Noelle and send her packing in the morning.
Now as he ate his breakfast and studied her, he was
trying to figure out a way to hold onto Noelle as a mistress
until he got bored with her, without encouraging
her as an actress.* He knew that he had to hold out
some bait. He felt his way cautiously. "Are you planning
to marry Philippe Sorel?" he asked.
"Of course not," Noelle replied. 'That is not what I want."
Now it was coming, "What do you want?" Gautier
asked.
"I told you," Noelle said quietly. "I want to be an
Stress."
' Gautier bit into another croissant, stalling for time.
: course," he said. Then he added, "There are many
; dramatic coaches I could send you to, Noelle, who I'll ..."
"No," she said. Noelle was watching him pleasantly,
tly, as though eager to accede to anything he sug-And
yet Gautier had a feeling that inside her
a core of steel. There were many ways she could
e said "no." With anger, reproach, disappointment,
ilking, but she had said it with softness. And absolute
aality. This was going to be more difficult than he had
nticipated. For a moment Armand Gautier was tempt-to
tell her, as he told dozens of girls every week, to
away, that he had no time to waste on her. But he
aught of the incredible sensations he had experienced

; the night and he knew he would be a fool to let
go so soon. She was surely worth a slight, a very
| slight, compromise.
"Very weH," Gautier said. "I will give you a play to him study. When you have memorized it, you will read it to no me and we will see how much talent you have. Then \ we can deride what to do with you."
"Thank you, Armand," she said. There was no I triumph in her words, nor even any pleasure that he
; could detect Just a simple acknowledgment of the
inevitable. For the first time Gautier felt a small twinge
of doubt. But that of course was ridiculous. He was a
master at handling women.
While Noelle was getting dressed, Armand Gautier
went into his book-lined study and scanned the familiar-looking
worn volumes on the shelves. Finally, with
a wry smile, he selected Euripides' Andromache. It was
one of the most difficult classics to act. He went back
into the bedroom and handed the play to Noelle.
"Here you are, my dear," he said. "When you have
memorized the part, we shall go over it together."
"Thank you, Armand. You will not be sorry."
The more he thought about it, the more pleased
Gautier was with his ploy. It would take Noelle a week
or two to memorize the part, or what was even more
likely, she would come to him and confess that she was
unable to memorize it He would sympathize with her,
explain how difficult die art of acting was, and they
could assume a relationship untainted by her ambition.
Gautier made a date to have dinner with Noelle that
evening, and she left.
When Noelle returned to the apartment she shared
with Philippe Sorel, she found him waiting for her. He
was very drunk.
"You bitch," he yelled. "Where have you been all
nightr
It would not matter what she said. Sorel knew that
he was going to listen to her apologies, beat her up,
then take her to bed and forgive her.
But instead of apologizing Noelle merely said, "With
another man, Philippe. I've come to pick up my
things."
And as Sorel watched her hi stunned disbelief, Noelle
walked into the bedroom and began to pack.
"For Christ's sake, Noelle," he pleaded. "Dónt do
this! We love each other. We're going to get married."
He talked to her for the next half hour, arguing, threatening,
cajoling, and by that time Noelle had finished
packing and had left die apartment and Sorel had no
idea why he had lost her, for he did not know that he
had never possessed her.

Armand Gautier was in the middle of directing a
new play that was to open in two weeks and he spent

all day at the theater in rehearsals. As a rule when
Gautier was in production, he thought of nothing else.
Part of his genius was the intense concentration he was
able to bring to his work. Nothing existed for him but
the four walls of the theater and the actors he was working with. This day
however was different Gautier

; Ms mind constantly wandering to Noelle and the night they had had together.
The actors
go through a scene and then stop and wait for
comments, and Gautier would suddenly realize
he had been paying no attention. Furious with
~ he tried to focus his attention on what he was
but thoughts of Noelle's naked body and the
aazing things it had done to him would keep coming black. In the middle of
one dramatic scene he found that he was walking around the stage with an
erection,
1 he had to excuse himself.
Because Gautier had an analytical mind he tried to
out what it was about this girl that had affected
like this. Noelle was beautiful, but he had slept with some of the most
beautiful women hi the world,
was consummately skilled at lovemaMng but so
other women to whom he had made love. She opened intelligent but not
brilliant; her personality was
sant but not complex. There was something else,
^something the director could not quite put his finger
And then he remembered her soft "no" and he felt a it was a clue. There was
some force in her that him irresistible, that would obtain anything she wanted.
;re was something hi her that was untouched. And
like other men before him Armand Gautier felt that
though Noelle had affected him more deeply than he
, eared to admit to himself, he had not touched her at
all, and this was a challenge that his masculinity could
Lnot refuse.
Gautier spent the day hi a confused state of mind.
He looked forward to the evening with tremendous anticipation,
not so much because he wanted to make
love to Noelle but because he wanted to prove to himself
that he had been building something out of nothing.
He wanted Noelle to be a disappointment to him
so that he could dismiss her from his life.
As they made love that night, Armand Gautier. made
himself consciously aware of the tricks and devices and
artifices Noelle used so he would realize that it was all
mechanical, without emotion. But he was mistaken.
She gave herself to him fully and completely, caring
only about bringing him pleasure such as he had never
known before and reveling in his enjoyment. When
morning came Gautier was more firmly bewitched by

her than ever.
Noelle prepared breakfast for him again, this time delicate crepes with bacon and jam, and hot coffee, and it was magnificent.
"All right," Gautier told himself. "You have found a young girl who is beautiful to look at, who can make love and cook. Bravo! But is that enough for an intelligent man? When you are through making love and eating, you must talk. What can she talk to you about?" The answer was that it didn't really matter.
There had been no more mention of the play and Gautier was hoping that Noelle had either forgotten about it or had been unable to cope with memorizing the lines. When she left in the morning, she promised to have dinner with him that evening.
"Can you get away from Philippe?" Gautier asked.
"I've left him," Noelle said simply. She gave Gautier her new address.
He stared at her for a moment. "I see."
But he did not. Not in the least

They spent the night together again. When they were not making love, they talked. Or rather Gautier talked. Noelle seemed so interested in him that he found himself talking about things he had not discussed in years, personal things that he had never revealed to anyone before. No mention was made of the play he had given her to read, and Gautier congratulated himself on having solved his problemso neatly.
The following night when they had had dinner and were ready to retire, Gautier started toward the bedroom.
"Not yet," Noelle said.
He turned in surprise.

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I you would listen to me do the play."
of--of course," Gautier stammered, "when-s
ready."
ady."
ak his head. "I don't want you to read ft,
|he said. "I want to hear it when you have
it so that I can really judge you as an

I memorized it," Noelle replied.
at her in disbelief. It was impossible that
have learned the entire part in only three

a ready to hear me?" she asked.
Gautier had no choice. "Of course," he
| gestured toward the center of the room. "That
aur stage. The audience will be here." He sat a a large comfortable settee,
began to do the play. Gautier could feel the
begin to crawl, his own personal stigmata,
that happened to him when he encountered
Not that Noelle was expert. Far from it.
shone through every move and ges-she
had something much more than mere him had a rare honesty, a natural talent
that gave him a fresh meaning and color.
Noelle finished the soliloquy, Gautier said
think that one day you will become an imoelle.
I really mean that. I am going
to>u to George's Faber, who is the best dramatic
fall of France. Working with him, you will--"

oked at her in surprise. It was that same soft
" air. Positive and final.
I what?" Gautier asked in some confusion. "Fa-I
not take on anyone but the biggest actors. He asked take you because I tell him to."
|going to work with you," Noelle said.
could feel the anger mounting hi him. "I
* him anyone," he snapped. "I am not a teacher.
I direct professional actors. When you are a professional
actor, then I will direct you." He was fighting to

check the anger hi his voice. "Do you understand?"
Noelle nodded. "Yes, I understand, Armand."
«Very well then."
Mollified, he took Noelle hi his arms and received a warm kiss from her. He knew now that he had worried unnecessarily. She was like any other woman, she needed to be dominated. He would have no further problem with her.
Their lovemaktag that night surpassed anything that had gone before, possibly, Gautier thought, because of the added excitement of the slight quarrel they had had.
Daring die night he said to her, "You really can be a wonderful actress, Noelle. I'm going to be very proud of you."
Thank you, Armand," she whispered.
Noelle fixed breakfast in the morning, and Gautier left for the theater. When he telephoned Noelle during the day, she did not answer, and when he arrived home that night she was not there. Gautier waited for her to return, and when she did not appear he lay awake all night wondering if she could have been hi an accident.
He tried to phone Noelle at her apartment, but there was no answer. He sent a telegram that went undelivered, and when he stopped at her apartment after rehearsal, no one answered his ring.
During the week that followed, Gautier was frantic. Rehearsals were turning into a shambles. He was screaming at all the actors and upsetting them so badly that his stage manager suggested they stop for the day and Gautier agreed. After the actors had left, he sat on the stage alone, trying to understand what had happened to him. He told himself that Noelle was just another woman, a cheap ambitious blonde with the heart of a shopgirl who wanted to be a star. He denigrated her in every way he could think of, but in the end he knew it was no use. He had to have her. That night he
115

idered the streets of Paris, getting drunk in small where he was unknown. He tried to think of ways reach Noelle but to no avail There was no one he I could even talk to about her, except Philippe Sorel, I and that, of course, was out of the question.
A week after Noelle had disappeared, Armand Gautier arrived home at four o'clock in the morning, a drunk, opened the door and walked into the living room. All the lights were on. Noelle was curled up in an easy chair dressed hi one of his robes, reading a book. She looked up as he entered, and smiled.
, "Hello, Armand."
, Gautier stared at her, his heart lifting, a feeling of

infinite relief and happiness flooding through him. He said, "Well begin working tomorrow."

CATHERINE

Washington: 1940

Washington, B.C., was the most exciting city that Catherine Alexander had ever seen. She had always thought of Chicago as the heartland, but Washington was a revelation. Here was the real core of America, the pulsating center of power. At first, .Catherine had been bewildered by the variety of uniforms that filled the streets: Army, Navy Air Corps, Marines. For the first time Catherine began to feel the grim possibility of war as something real.

In Washington the physical presence of war was everywhere. This was the city where war, if it came, would begin. Here it would be declared and mobilized and masterminded. This was the city that held in its hand the fate of the world. And she, Catherine Alexander, was going to be a part of it

She had moved in with Susie Roberts, who was living in a bright and cheery fourth floor walk-up apartment with a fair-sized living room, two small adjoining bedrooms, a tiny bathroom and a kitchenette built for a midget. Susie had seemed glad to see her. Her first words were:

"Hurry and unpack and get your best dress steamed out. You have a dinner date tonight"

Catherine blinked. "What took you so long?"

"Cathy, in Washington, it's the girls who have the little black books. This town is so full of lonely men, it's pitiful"

They had dinner that first evening at the Willard

Susie's date was a congressman from Indiana Catherine's date was a lobbyist from Oregon, and men were in town without their wives. After din-they went dancing at the Washington Country Catherine had hoped that the lobbyist might be to give her a job. Instead she got the offer of a car

her own apartment, which she declined with

Susie brought the congressman back to the apart-and Catherine went to bed. A short time later heard them go into Susie's bedroom» and the bed-began to creak. Catherine pulled a pillow over head to drown out the sound, but it was impossible, visualized Susie in bed with her date making wild, sionate love. In the morning when Catherine got up breakfast, Susie was already up, looking bright and heerful, ready to go to work. Catherine searched for elltale wrinkles and other signs of dissipation on Susie, there were none. On the contrary she looked radi-her skin absolutely flawless. My God, Catherine fthought, she's a female Dorian Gray. One day she's I going to come in looking great, and I'll look a hundred \ and ten years old. *

A few days later at breakfast Susie said, "Hey, I \ heard about a job opening that might interest you. One ; of the girls at the party last night said she's quitting to go back to Texas. God knows why anyone who ever got away from Texas would want to go back there. I * remember I was in Amarillo a few years ago and..."

"Where does she work?" Catherine interrupted.

"Who?"

"The girl," Catherine said patiently.

"Oh. She works for Bill Fraser. He's in charge of public relations for the State Department Newsweek did a cover story on him last month. It's supposed to be a cushy job. I just heard about it last night, so if you get over there now, you should beat all the other girls toit."

"Thanks," Catherine said gratefully. "William Fraser, here I come."

Twenty minutes later Catherine was on her way to the State Department When she arrived, the guard told her where Eraser's office was and she took the elevator upstairs. Public Relations. It sounded exactly like the sort of job she was looking for.

Catherine stopped in the corridor outside the office and took out her hand mirror to check her makeup. . She would do. It was not yet nine-thirty so she should have the field to herself. She opened the door and walked in.

The outer office was packed with girls standing, sitting, leaning against the wall, all seemingly talking at once. The frantic receptionist behind the beleaguered desk was vainly trying to bring order into the scene.

"Mr. Fraser's busy right now," she kept repeating. "I don't know when he can see you."

"Is he interviewing secretaries or isn't he?" one of the girls demanded.

"Yes, but . , ." She looked around desperately at

the mob. "My God! This is ridiculous!"
The corridor door opened and three more girls
pushed their way in, shoving Catherine to one side.
"Is the job filled yet?" one of them asked.
"Maybe he'd like a harem," another girl suggested.
"Then we can all stay."
The door to the inner office opened, and a man
came out. He was just a little under six feet, and had
the almost-slim body of a nonathlete who keeps in
shape at the athletic club three mornings a week. He
had curly blond hah: graying at the temples, bright blue
eyes and a strong, rather forbidding jaw line. "What in
hell's going on here, Sally?" His voice was deep and
authoritative.
"These girls heard about the vacancy, Mr. Fraser."
"Jesus! I didn't hear about it myself until an hour
ago." His eyes swept over the room. "It's like jungle
drums." As his eyes moved toward Catherine, she

op straight and gave him her warmest Ill-bea-secretary
smile, but Ms eyes passed right over her
went back to the receptionist. "I need a copy of '." he told her. "An issue that came out three or
: weeks ago. It has a picture of Stalin on the cover.**
"I'll order it, Mr. Eraser," the receptionist said.
"I need it now." He started back toward his office.
"I'll call the Tune-Life Bureau," the receptionist
dd, "and see if they can dig up a copy."
Eraser stopped at die door. "Sally, I have Senator
Jorah on the line. I want to read him a paragraph
that issue. You have two minutes to find a copy
[lor me." He went into his office and closed the door.
The girls in the room looked at one another and
| shrugged. Catherine stood there, thinking hard. She
| turned and pushed her way out of the office.
"Good. That's one down," one of the girls said.
The receptionist picked up the telephone and dialed \t information. "The number for the Time-Life Bureau,"
? she said. The room grew silent as the girls watched her. \ "Thank you." She replaced the receiver, then picked it
up and dialed again. "Hello. This is Mr. William I Eraser's office in the State Department. Mr. Fraser a needs a back issue of Life immediately. It's the one
with Stalin on the cover. . . You don't keep any back
issues there? Who could I talk to? ... I see. Thank
you." She hung up.
"Tough luck, honey," one of the girls said.
Another added: "They sure come up with some
beauties, don't they? If he wants to come over to my
place tonight, 111 read to him." There was a laugh.
The intercom buzzed. She flipped down the key.

"Your two minutes are up," Fraser's voice said.
"Where's the magazine?"
The receptionist drew a deep breath. "I just talked to the Time-Life Bureau, Mr. Fraser, and they said it would be impossible to get . . ."
The door opened and Catherine hurried in. Jh her hand was a copy of Life with a picture of Stalin on the cover. She poshed her way through to the desk and placed the magazine in the receptionist's hand. The receptionist stared at it incredulously. "I ... I have a copy of it here, Mr. Fraser. IH bring it right in." She rose, gave Catherine a grateful smile and hurried into the inner office. The other girls turned to stare at Catherine with suddenly hostile eyes.
Five minutes later the door to Fraser's office opened, and Fraser and the receptionist appeared. The receptionist pointed to Catherine. "That's the girl"
William Fraser turned to regard Catherine specular* tively. "Would you come in, please?"
"Yes, sir.*1 Catherine followed Fraser into his office, feeling the eyes of the other girls stabbing into her back. Fraser closed the door.
His office was the typical, bureaucratic Washington office, but he had decorated it in style, stamping it with his personal taste in furniture and art.
"Sit down, Miss . . ."
"Alexander, Catherine Alexander."
"Sally tells me that yon came up with the Life magazine."
"Yes, sir."
"I assume you didn't just happen to have a three-week-old issue in your purse."
"No, sir."
"How did you find it so quickly?"
"I went down to the barber shop. Barber shops and dentists' offices always have old issues lying around."
"I see." Fraser smiled, and his craggy face seemed less formidable. "I don't think that would have occurred to me," he said. "Are you that bright about everything?"
Catherine thought about Ron Peterson. "No, sir," she replied.
"Are you looking for a job as a secretary?"
"Not really." Catherine saw his look of surprise. till take it," she added hastily. "What Fd really like to be is your assistant"
^"Why don't we start you out as a secretary today?" said dryly. "Tomorrow you can be my assist"
looked at him hopefully. "You mean I have the VT
"On trial." He flicked down the intercom key and opened toward the box. "Sally, would you please thank
>young ladies. Tell them the position is filled."
«Right, Mr. Fraser."
He flicked the button up. "Will thirty dollars a week

> satisfactory?"
**Oh yes, sir. Thank you» Mr. Fraser." «You can start tomorrow morning, nine o'clock.
> Sally give you a personnel form to fill out."

When Catherine left the office, she walked over to Washington Post. The policeman at the desk in the
pobby stopped her.
Tm William Eraser's personal secretary," she said
I loftily, "over at the State Department I need some in
formation from your morgue."
"What kind of information?'*
"On William Fraser.'*
He studied her a moment and said, "That's the
'weirdest request I've had all week. Has your boss him been bothering you, or something?"
"No," she said disarmingly. "I'm planning to write
an expose on him."
Five minutes later, a clerk was showing her into the
morgue. He pulled out the file on William Fraser, and
: Catherine began to read.
One hour later Catherine was one of the world's
foremost authorities on William Fraser. He was forty-five
years old, had been graduated from Princeton
summa cum laude, had started an advertising agency,
Fraser Associates, which had become one of the most
successful agencies in the business, and had taken a
leave of absence a year ago at the request of the President,
to work for the government He had been mar*
lied to Lydia Campion, a wealthy socialite. They had
been divorced for four years. There were no children,
Fraser was a millionaire and had a home in Georgetown
and a summer place at Bar Harbor, Maine. His
hobbles were tennis, boating and polo. Several of the
news stories referred to him as "one of America's most
eligible bachelors."
When Catherine arrived home and told Susie her
good news, Susie insisted that they go out to celebrate.
Two rich Annapolis cadets were in town.
Catherine's date turned out to be a pleasant enough
boy, but an evening she kept mentally comparing him
to William Fraser, and compared to Fraser the boy
seemed callow and dull. Catherine wondered whether
she was going to fall in love with her new boss. She
had not felt any girlish tingly feeling when she had
been with him, but there was something else, a liking
for him as a person and a feeling of respect She decided
that the tingly feeling probably existed only in
French sex novels.
The cadets took the girls to a small Italian restaurant
on the outskirts of Washington where they had an
excellent dinner, then went to see Arsenic and Old
Lace, which Catherine enjoyed tremendously. At the

end of the evening the boys brought diem home, and Susie invited them in for a nightcap. When it appeared to Catherine that they were starting to settle down for the night, she excused herself and said she had to go to bed.

Her date protested. "We haven't even gotten started yet," he said. "Look at them."

Susie and her escort were on the couch, locked in a passionate embrace.

Catherine's escort clutched her arm. "There could be a war soon," he said earnestly. Before Catherine could stop him, he took her hand and placed it against the hardness between his legs. "You wouldn't send a man into battle in this condition, would you?"

Catherine withdrew her hand, fighting not to be an "I've given it a lot of thought," she said evenly,

id I've decided to sleep only with the walking tided." She turned and went into her bedroom, eking the door behind her. She found it difficult to > to sleep. She lay in bed thinking about William Fra-her new job and the male hardness of the boy Annapolis. An hour after she had gone to bed, heard Susie's bedsptings creaking wildly. From him on sleep was impossible.

At eight-thirty the next morning Catherine arrived at new office. The door was unlocked, and the light in |fhe reception office was on. From the inner office she 1 beard the sound of a man's voice and she walked Snide.

William Fraser was at his desk, dictating into a mane. He looked up as Catherine entered and snapped |taff the machine. "You're early," he said.

"I wanted to look around and get my bearings before I began work."

"Sit down." There was something in his tone that , puzzled her. He seemed angry» Catherine took a seat

"I don't like snoops, Miss Alexander."

Catherine felt her face redden. "I--I don't understand."

' "Washington's a small town. It's not even a town. It's' a goddamn village. There's nothing that goes on here that everybody doesn't know about in five minutes."

"I still don't--"

"The publisher of the Post phoned me two minutes after you arrived there to ask why my secretary was doing research on me."

Catherine sat there stunned, not knowing what to say.

"Did you find out all the gossip you wanted to know?"

She felt her embarrassment swiftly changing to anger.

"I wasn't snooping," Catherine said. She rose to her feet "The only reason I wanted information on

you was so that I would know what kind of man I was working for." Her voice was trembling with indignation. 1 think a good secretary should adapt to her employer, and I wanted to know what to adapt to."

Eraser sat there, his expression hostile.

Catherine stared at him, hating him, on the verge of tears. "You don't have to worry about it anymore, Mr. Fraser. I quit" She turned and started toward the door.

"Sit down," Fraser said, his voice like a whiplash.

Catherine turned, in shock. "I can't stand goddamn prima donnas."

She glared at him. "I'm not a . . ."

"OK. Tm sorry. Now, will you sit down. Please?"

He picked up a pipe front his desk and lit it

Catherine stood there not knowing what to do, filled with humiliation. "I don't think it's going to work," she began.'1 . . ."

Fraser drew on the pipe and flicked out the match.

"Of course it'll work, Catherine," he said reasonably.

"You cant quit now. Look at all the trouble Fd have breaking in a new girl."

Catherine looked at him and saw the glint of amusement hi his bright blue eyes. He smiled, and reluctantly her lips curved into a small smile. She sank into a chair.

"That's better. Did anyone ever tell you you're too sensitive?"

"I suppose so. I'm sorry."

Fraser leaned back hi his chair. "Or maybe I'm the one who's oversensitive. It's a pain in the ass being called 'one of America's most eligible bachelors.'"

Catherine wished he would not use words like that. But what bothered her most? she wondered. Ass or bachelor?

Maybe Fraser was right. Perhaps her interest hi him was not as impersonal as she thought Perhaps subconsciously . . .

". . . a target for every goddamned idiotic unmar- female in the world," Fraser was saying. "You wouldn't believe it if I told you how aggressive women be."

Wouldn't she? Try our cashier* Catherine blushed as the thought of it

It's enough to turn a man into a fairy." Fraser led. "Since this seems to be National Research ek, tell me about you. Any boyfriends?"

"No," she said. That is, no one special," she added ickly.

He looked at her quizzically. "Where do you live?"

"I share an apartment with a girl who was a class-at college."

"Northwestern."

She looked at him in surprise, then realized he must have seen the personnel form she had filled out

"Yes, sir."
"Pm going to tell yon something about me that yon wouldn't find in the newspaper morgue. I'm a tough son-ofabitch
to work for. Youll find me fair, but I'm a per-iectionist.
We're hard to live with. Do you think you
can manage?"
"Ill try," Catherine said.
"Good. Sally win fin you in on the routine around
,. TT»e most important thing you have to remember
one is that I'm a chain coffee drinker. I like it black and
hot"
"I'll remember." She got to her feet and started
toward the door.
"And, Catherine?"
"Yes, Mr. Fraser?"
"When you go home tonight, practice saying some
profanity hi front of the mirror. If you're going to keep
wincing every time I say a four-letter word, it's going
to drive me up the wall"
He was doing it to her again, making her feel like a
Yes, Mr. Fraser," she said coldly. She stormed
lout of the office, almost slamming the door behind her.

The meeting had not gone anything like Catherine
had expected. She no longer liked William Eraser. She
thought he was a smug, dominating, arrogant boor. No
wonder his wife had divorced him. Wen she was here
and she would start, but she made up her mind that she
would begin looking for another job, a job working for
a human being instead of a despot.
When Catherine walked out of the door, Fraser
leaned back in his chair, a smile touching his lips. Were
girls still that achingly young, that earnest and dedicated?
In her anger with her eyes blazing and her lips
trembling Catherine had seemed so defenseless that
Fraser had wanted to take her in his arms and protect
her. Against himself, he admitted .ruefully. There was a
kind of old-fashioned shining quality about her that
he'd almost forgotten existed hi girls. She was lovely
and she was bright, and she had a mind of her own.
She was going to become the best goddamn secretary
that he had ever had. And deep down Fraser had a
feeling that she was going to become more than that.
How much more» he was not sure yet He had been
burned so often that an automatic warning system
took over the moment his emotions were touched by
any female. Those moments had come very seldom.
His pipe had gone out. He lit it again, and the smile
was still on his face. A little later when Fraser called
her in for dictation, Catherine was courteous but cool.
She waited for Fraser to say something personal so she

could show him how aloof she was, but he was distant
and businesslike. He had, Catherine thought, obviously
wiped the incident of this morning from his
mind. How insensitive could a man be?
In spite of herself Catherine found the new job fascinating.
The telephone rang constantly, and the names
of the callers filled her with excitement During the first
week the Vice-President of the United States called
twice, half a dozen senators, the Secretary of State and
a famous actress who was in town publicizing her latest
picture. The week was climaxed by a telephone call
President Roosevelt, and Catherine was sd ner-she
dropped the phone and disconnected his
tary.
In addition to the telephone calls Eraser had a con-fftant
round of appointments at the office, his country
PClub or at one of the better-known restaurants. After
phe first few weeks Fraser allowed Catherine to set up
| Ibis appointments for him and make the reservations. 1 She began to know
who Fraser wanted to see and who
|he wanted to avoid. Her work was so absorbing that by ' the end of the month
she had totally forgotten about
| looking for another job.
* Catherine's relationship with Fraser was still on a
| very impersonal level, but she knew him well enough
now to realize that his aloofness was not unfriend-It
was a dignity, a wall of reserve that served as 1 a shield against the world.
Catherine had a feeling that
| Fraser was really very lonely. His job called for him to (be gregarious,
but she sensed that by nature he was a
solitary man. She also sensed that William Fraser was
out of her league. For that matter so is most of male
America, she decided.
She double-dated with Susie every now and then but
found most of her escorts were married sexual athletes,
and she preferred to go to a movie or the theater alone.
She saw 'Gertrude Lawrence and a new comedian
named Danny Kaye hi Lady in the Dark, and Life with
Father, and Alice in Arms, with a young actor named
Kirk Douglas. She loved Kitty Foyle with Ginger Rogers
because it reminded her of herself. One night at a
performance of Hamlet she saw Fraser sitting in a box
with an exquisite girl hi an expensive white evening
gown that Catherine had seen in Vogue. She had no
idea who the girl was. Fraser made his own personal
dates, and she never knew where he was going or with
whom. He looked across the theater and saw her. The
next morning he made no reference to it until he had
finished the morning's dictation.
"How did you like Hamlet?" he asked.
"The play's going to make it, but I didn't care much
for the performances."
"I liked the actors," he said. "I thought the girl who

pkyed Ophelia was particularly good."
Catherine nodded and started to leave.
"Didn't you like Ophelia?" Fraser persisted.
"If you want my honest opinion," Catherine said carefully, "I didn't think she was able to keep her head above water." She turned and walked out.
When Catherine arrived at the apartment that night, Susie was waiting for her. "You had a visitor," Susie said.
"Who?"
"An FBI man. They're investigating you."
My God, thought Catherine. They found oat I'm a virgin, and therms probably some kind of law against it in Washington. Aloud j*e said, "Why would the FBI be investigating me?"
"Because you're working for the government now."
"Oh."
"How's your Mr. Fraser?"
"My Mr. Fraser's just fine," Catherine said.
"How do you think he'd like me?"
Catherine studied her tall, willowy brunette roommate.
"For breakfast."
As the weeks went by Catherine became acquainted with the other secretaries working in nearby offices. Several of the girls were having affairs with their bosses, and it did not seem to matter to them whether the men were married or single. They envied Catherine's working for William Fraser.
"What's Golden Boy really like?" one of them asked Catherine one day at lunch. "Has he made a pass at you yet?"
"Oh, he doesn't bother with that," Catherine said earnestly. "I just come in at nine o'clock every morning, we roll around on the couch until one o'clock, then we break for lunch."
"Seriously, how do you find him?"
IP

"Resistible," Catherine lied. Her feelings toward Iliam Fraser had mellowed considerably since their : quarrel. He had told her the truth when he said he a perfectionist Whenever she made a mistake, she reprimanded for it, but she had found him to be and understanding. She had watched him take time from his own problems to help other people, peo-who could do nothing for him, and he always ar-it

so that he never took credit for it Yes, she
Iced William Fraser very much indeed, but that was
|jtto one's business but her own.

Once when they had had a great deal of work to
itch up on, Fraser had asked Catherine to have din
net with him at his home so that they could work late.
[Takaadge, Eraser's chauffeur, was waiting with the limousine
in front Of the building. Several secretaries
coming out of the building watched with knowing eyes
as Fraser ushered Catherine into the back seat of the
'car and slid in next to her. The limousine glided ', smoothly into the late
afternoon traffic.

"I'm going to ruin your reputation," Catherine said.
Fraser laughed. "Ill give you some advice. If you
ever want to have an affair with a public figure, do it
out in the open."

"What about catching cold?"
He grinned. "I meant, take your paramour--if they
still use that word--out to public places, well-known restaurants, theaters."

"Shakespearean plays?" Catherine asked innocently.
Fraser ignored it. "People are always looking for
devious motives. They'll say to themselves, 'Uh-huh,
he's taking so-and-so out in public. I wonder who he's
seeing secretly.' People never believe the obvious."
"It's an interesting theory."
"Arthur Conan Doyle wrote a story based on deceiving
people with the obvious," Fraser said. "I don't
recall the name of it"

"It was Edgar Allen Poe. The Purloined Letter."*
The moment Catherine said it, she wished she hadnt

Men did not like smart girls. But then what did it matter?
She was not he girl, she was his secretary.

They rode the rest of the way in silence.

Fraser's home in Georgetown was something out of
a picture book. It was a four-story Georgian house that
must have been over two hundred years old. The door
was opened by a butler in a white jacket. Fraser said,
"Frank, this is Miss Alexander."

"Hello, Frank. We've talked on the phone," Catherine
said.

"Yes, ma'am. It's nice to meet you, Miss Alexander."

Catherine looked at the reception hall. It had a beautiful old staircase leading to the second floor, its oak wood burnished to a sheen. The floor was marble, and overhead was a dazzling chandelier.

Fraser studied her face. "Like it?" he asked.

"Lite it? Oh, yes!"

He smiled, and Catherine wondered if she had sounded too enthusiastic, like a girl who was attracted by wealth, like one of those aggressive females who were always chasing him, "It's ... it's pleasant," she added lamely.

Fraser was looking at her mockingly, and Catherine had the terrible feeling mat he could read her thoughts. "Come into the study."

Catherine followed him into a large book-lined room done hi dark paneling. It had an aura of another age, the graciousness of an easier, friendlier way of life.

Fraser was studying her. "Well?" he asked gravely.

Catherine was not going to be caught again. "It's smaller than the Library of Congress," she said, defensively.

He laughed aloud. "You're right."

Frank came into the room carrying a silver ice bucket. He set it on top of the bar in the corner. "What time would you like dinner, Mr. Fraser?"

"Seven-thirty."

"I'll tell the cook." Frank left the room.

1

llwWhat may I fix you to drink?"
!f one "Nothing, thank you."
' He looked over at her. "Don't you drink, Gather-"Not when Fm working," she said. "I get my p'& and him mixed up."
"You mean p's and 4% don't you?"
"Fs and o's. They're next to each other on the riter."
"I didn't know."
"You're not supposed to. That's why you pay me a

!*s ransom every week."
"What do I pay you?" Fraser asked.
"Thirty dollars and dinner in the most beautiful
| house in Washington."
"You're sure you wont change your mind about that
1 drink?"
"No, thank you," Catherine said.
Fraser mixed a martini for himself, and Catherine
' wandered around the room looking at the books. There
were all the traditional classic titles and, in addition, a
whole section of books in Italian and another section
' hi Arabic.
Fraser walked over to her side. "You don't really
speak Italian and Arabic, do you?" Catherine asked.
"Yes. I lived in the Middle East for a few years and
learned Arabic."
"And the Italian?"
"I went with an Italian actress for a while."
Her face flushed. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to pry."
Fraser looked at her, his eyes filled with amusement,
and Catherine felt like a schoolgirl. She was not sure
whether she hated William Fraser or loved him. Of one
thing she was sure. He was the nicest man she had ever
known.
Dinner was superb. AH the dishes were French with
divine sauces. The dessert was Cherries Jubilee. No
wonder Fraser worked out at the club three mornings a
week.
"How is it?" Fraser asked her.
"It's not like the food in the commissary,'' she said
and smiled.
Fraser laughed. "I must eat in the commissary one
day."
"I wouldn't if I were you."
He looked at her. "Food that bad?"
"It's not the food. It's the girls. They'd mob you."
"What makes you think so?"
"They talk about you all the time."
"You mean they ask questions about me?"
"Ill say," she grinned.
"I imagine when they're through, they must feel
frustrated by the lack of information."
She shook her head. "Wrong. I make up all kinds of
stories about you."
Fraser was leaning back in his chair, relaxing over a
brandy. "What kind of stories?"
"Are you sure you want to hear?"
"Positive."
"Well, I tell them that you're an ogre and that you
scream at me all day long."
He grinned. "Not all day long."
"I tell them that you're a nut about hunting and that
you carry a loaded rifle around the office while you dictate

and I'm constantly afraid that it'll go off and kill
me."
"That must hold their interest."
"They're having a fine time trying to figure out the
real you."
"Have you figured out the real me?" Fraser's tone
had become serious.
She looked into his bright blue eyes for a moment,
then turned away. "I think so," she said.
"Who am I?"
Catherine felt a sudden tension within her. The bantering
was over and a new note had crept into the conversation.
An exciting note, a disturbing note. She did
not answer.
Fraser looked at her for a moment, then smiled.
»»Tm a dull subject More dessert?"
"No, thank you. I wont eat again for a week."
"Let's go to work."

They worked until midnight. Fraser saw Catherine
to the door, and Talmadge was waiting outside to drive
her back to the apartment.
She thought about Fraser all the way home. His
strength, his humor, his compassion. Someone had
once said that a man had to be very strong before he
could allow himself to be gentle. William Fraser was
Very strong. This evening had been one of the nicest
evenings of Catherine's life and it worried her. She was
afraid that she might turn into one of those jealous
secretaries who sits around the office all day hating every
girl who telephones her boss. Wen, she was not
going to allow that to happen. Every eligible female in
Washington was throwing herself at Fraser's head. She
was not going to join the crowd.
When Catherine returned to the apartment, Susie
was waiting up for her. She pounced on Catherine the
moment she came in.
"Give!" Susie demanded. "What happened?"
"Nothing happened," Catherine replied. "We had
dinner."
Susie stared at her incredulously. "Didn't he even
make a pass at you?"
"No, of course not."
Susie sighed. "I should have known it He was afraid
to."
"What do you mean by that?"
"What I mean by that, sweetie, is that you come off
like the Virgin Mary. He was probably afraid if he laid
a finger on you, you'd scream "rape* and faint dead
away."
Catherine felt her cheeks redden. "I'm not interested
hi him that way," she said stiffly. "And I don't come off
like the Virgin Mary." / come off like the Virgin

Catherine. Dear old Saint Catherine. All she had done was to move her holy headquarters to Washington. Nothing else had changed. She was still doing business at the same old church.

During the next six months Fraser was away a good deal. He made trips to Chicago and San Francisco and to Europe. There was always enough work to keep Catherine busy, and yet the office seemed lonely and empty with Fraser gone.
There was a constant stream of interesting visitors, most of them men, and Catherine found herself baraged with invitations. She had her choice of lunches, dinners, trips to Europe and bed. She accepted none of the invitations, partly because she was not interested in any of the men but mostly because she felt that Fraser would not approve of her mixing business with pleasure. they Fraser was aware of the constant opportunities she declined, he said nothing. The day after she had had dinner with him at his home he had given her a ten-dollar-a-week raise.

It seemed to Catherine that there was a change in the tempo of the city. People were moving faster, becoming more tense. The headlines screamed of a constant series of invasions and crises in Europe. The fall of France had affected Americans more deeply than the other swift-moving events in Europe, for they felt a sense of personal violation, a loss of liberty in a country that was one of the cradles of Liberty.
Norway had fallen, England was fighting for its life in the battle of Britain and a pact had been signed between Germany, Italy and Japan. There was a growing feeling of inevitability that America was going to get into the war. Catherine asked Fraser about it one day.
"I think it's just a question of time before we get involved," he said thoughtfully. "If England can't stop Hitler, we're going to have to."
"But Senator Borah says . . ."

"The symbol of the America Firsters should be an rich," Fraser commented angrily.
"What will you do if there's a war?"
"Be a hero," he said.
Catherine visualized him handsome in an officer's ^uniform going off to war, and she hated the idea. It |; seemed stupid to her that in this enlightened age people should still think they could solve their differences no by murdering one

another.
"Don't worry, Catherine," Fraser said. "Nothing will
' happen for a while. And when it does happen, well be
ijreadyforit."
"What about England?" she asked. "they Hitler decides
to invade, will it be able to stand up against him?
He has so many tanks and planes and they have nothing."
"They will have," Fraser assured her. "Very soon."
He had changed the subject, and they had gone back
to work.
One week later the headlines were filled with the
news of Roosevelt's new concept of lend-lease. So
Fraser had known about it and had tried to reassure
her without revealing any information.
The weeks went by swiftly. Catherine accepted an
occasional date, but each tune she found herself comparing
her escort to William Fraser, and she wondered
why she bothered going with anyone. She was aware
that she had backed herself into a bad emotional corner,
but she did not know how to get out of it. She told
herself that she was merely infatuated with Fraser and
would get over it, but meanwhile her feelings kept her
from enjoying the company of other men because they
all fell so far short of him.
Late one evening as Catherine was working, Fraser
came back to the office unexpectedly after attending a
play. She looked up, startled, as he walked in.
"What in hell are we running here?" he growled. "A
slave ship?"
"I wanted to finish this report," she said, "so you

could take it with you to San Francisco tomorrow."
"You could have mailed it to me," he replied. He sat
down in a chair opposite Catherine and studied her.
"Don't you have better things to do with your evenings
than get out dull reports?" he asked.
"I happened to be free this evening."
Fraser leaned back in the chair, folded his fingers together
and dropped them under his chin, staring at her.
"Do you remember what you said the first day you
walked into this office?"
"I said a lot of silly things."
"You said you didn't want to be a secretary. You
wanted to be my assistant."
She smiled. "I didn't know any better."
"You do now."
She looked up at him. "I don't understand."
"It's very simple, Catherine," he said quietly. "For
the past three months, you've really been my assistant.
Now I'm going to make it official."
She stared at him, unbelievingly. "Are you sure that

you... ?"
"I didn't give you the title or a salary raise sooner because I didn't want it to scare you. But now you know you can do it."
"I don't know what to say," Catherine stammered.
"I--you won't be sorry, Mr. Fraser."
"I'm sorry already. My assistants always call me Bill."
"Bill."
Later that night as Catherine lay hi bed, she remembered how he had looked at her and how it had made her feel, and it was a long time before she was able to go to sleep.
Catherine had written to her father several times asking him when he was coming to Washington to visit her. She was eager to show him around the city and introduce him to her friends and to Bill Fraser. She had received no reply to her last two letters. Worried, she phoned her uncle's house in Omaha. Her uncle an-ered the phone.
"Cathy! I--I was just about to call you."
Catherine's heart sank.
"How's father?"
There was a brief pause.
"He's had a stroke. I wanted to call you sooner but father asked me to wait until he was better."
Catherine gripped the receiver. «Is he better?"
"I'm afraid not, Cathy," her uncle's voice said. "He's iralyzed."
"I'm on my way," Catherine said.
She went in to Bill Eraser and told him the news. "I'm sorry," Eraser said.
"What can I do to help?"
"I don't know. I want to go to him right away, Bill."
"Of course." And he picked up a telephone and be gan to make calls. His chauffeur drove Catherine to her
* apartment, where she threw some clothes into a suitcase, and then took her to the airport, where Eraser had arranged a plane reservation for her.

When the plane landed at the Omaha airport, Catherine's aunt and uncle were there to meet her, and one look at their faces told her that she was too late. They drove hi silence to the funeral parlor and as Catherine entered the building she was filled with an ineffable sense of loss, of loneliness. A part of her had died and could never be recovered. She was ushered into the small chapel. Her father's body was lying in a simple coffin wearing his best suit. Time had shrunk him, as though the constant abrasion of living had worn him down and made bun smaller. Her uncle had handed Catherine her father's personal effects, the accumulations and treasures of a lifetime, and they consisted of fifty dollars in cash, some old snapshots, a few

receipted bills, a wristwatch, a tarnished silver penknife and a collection of hex letters to him, neatly tied with a

piece of string and dog-eared from constant reading. It was a pitiful legacy for any man to have left, and Catherine's heart broke for her fattier. His dreams were so big and his successes so small. She remembered how alive and vital he had been when she was a little girl and the excitement when he came home from the road with his pockets full of money and his arms full of presents. She remembered his wonderful inventions that never quite worked. It wasn't much to remember, but it was all there was left of him. There were suddenly so many things Catherine wanted to say to him, so much she wanted to do for him; and it would always be too late.

They buried her father in the small graveyard next to the church. Catherine had planned on spending the night with her aunt and uncle and taking the train back the next day, but suddenly she could not bear to stay a moment longer, and she called the airport and made a reservation on the next plane to Washington. Bill Fraser was at the airport to meet her, and it seemed the most natural thing in the world fur him to be there, waiting for her, taking care of her when she needed him.

He took Catherine to an old country inn in Virginia for dinner, and he listened while she talked about her father. In the middle of telling a funny story about him, Catherine began to cry, but strangely she felt no embarrassment in front of BiU Fraser.

He suggested that Catherine take some time off, but she wanted to keep busy, wanted to keep her mind filled with anything but the death of her father. She slipped into the habit of having dinner with Fraser once or twice a week, and Catherine felt closer to him than ever before.

It happened without any planning or forethought

They had been working late at the office. Catherine was checking some papers and sensed Bill Fraser standing in back of her. His fingers touched her neck, slowly and caressingly.

"Catherine . . ."

She turned to look up at him and an instant later she in his arms. It was as though they had kissed a Ifhousand tunes before, as though this was her past as I well as her future, where she had always belonged.

It's this simple, Catherine thought. It's always been f$his simple, but I didn't know it.

"Get your coat, darling," Bill Fraser said. "We're -going home."

In the car driving to Georgetown they sat close to-/!|!ether, Eraser's arm around Catherine, gentle and pfoptective.

She had never known such happiness. She was
Isure she was in love with him, and it did not matter if a he was not in love with her. He was fond of her, and '' she would settle for that. When she thought of what
she had been willing to settle for before--Ron Peter
son--she shuddered.
"Anything wrong?" Fraser asked.
Catherine thought of the motel room with the dirty
> cracked mirror. She looked at the strong intelligent
I face of the man with his arm around her. "Not now,"
' she said gratefully. She swallowed. "I have to tell you
something. I'm a virgin."
Fraser smiled and shook his head in wonder. "It's I incredible," he said.
"How did I wind up with the only
virgin favour the city of Washington?"
"I tried to correct it," Catherine said earnestly, "but
it just didn't work out."
"I'm glad it didn't," Fraser said.
"You mean you don't mind?"
He was smiling at her again, a teasing grin that lit up
his face. "Do you know your problem?" he asked.
'till say!"
"You've been worrying too much about it"
"I'll say!"
"The trick is to relax."
She shook her head gently.
"No, darling. The trick is to be in love."
Half an hour later the car pulled up in front of his

house. Fraser led Catherine inside to the library.

"Would you like a drink?"

She looked at him. "Let's go upstairs."

He took her in his arms and kissed her hard. She
held him fiercely, wanting to draw him into her. // anything
goes wrong tonight, Catherine thought, I'll kill
myself. I really will kill myself.

"Come on," he said. He took Catherine's hand.

Bill Eraser's bedroom was a large masculine-looking
room with a Spanish highboy against one wall. At the
far end of the room was an alcove with a fireplace and
hi front of it, a breakfast table. Against one wall was a
large double bed. To the left was a dressing room and
off that, a bathroom.

"Are you sure you wouldn't care for that drink?"
Fraser asked.

"I don't need it-He
took her in his arms again and kissed her. She
felt the male hardness of him, and a delicious warmth
coursed through her body.

'till be back," he said.

Catherine watched him disappear into the dressing
room. This was the nicest, most wonderful man she
had ever known. She stood there thinking about him,
then suddenly realized why he had left the room. He
wanted to give her a chance to undress alone, so that
she would not be embarrassed. Quickly Catherine began
taking off her clothes. She stood there a minute
later nude and looked down at her body and thought, Good-bye, Saint
Catherine. She went over to the bed,
pulled back the spread and crawled between the sheets.

Fraser walked in, wearing a cranberry moire silk
dressing gown. He came over to the bed and stared at
her. Her black hair was fanned out against the white
pillow, framing her beautiful face. It was all the more
stirring because he knew that it was totally unplanned.

He slipped the robe off and moved into the bed be 141

I her. She suddenly remembered.
"I'm not wearing anything," Catherine said. "Do him think I'll get pregnant?"
"Let's hope so."
She looked at him, puzzled, and opened her mouth
ask him what he meant, but he put his lips on hers
ad his hands began to move down her body, gently
ploring, and she forgot everything except what was to her, her whole
consciousness concen-on
one part of her body, feeling him try to enter
hard and pulsing, forcing, an instant of sharp,
icxpected pain, then sliding in, moving faster and fast-an
alien body in her body, plunging deep inside a, moving with a rhythm that
grew more and more
atic, and he said, "Are you ready?" She was not
isure what she was supposed to be ready for, but she
jsaid, "Yes," and suddenly he cried, "Oh, Cathy!" and
Pmade one last sporadic thrust and lay still on top of
Iher.
And it was all over, and he was saying* "Was it won-lderful
for you?" and she said, "Yes, it was wonderful,"
and he said, "It gets better as it goes along," and she
'was filled with joy that she was able to bring him this ; happiness, and she

tried not to worry about what a dis,appointment
it had been. Perhaps it was like olives. ; You had to acquire a taste for it.
She lay in his arms, \ letting the sound of his voice wash over her, comfort
ing her, and she thought This is what is important,
being together as two human beings, loving and sharing
each other. She had read too many lurid novels,
heard too many promising love songs. She had been I expecting too much. Or
perhaps--and if this were true, 1 she must face it--she was frigid. As though
reading her
thoughts, Fraser pulled her closer and said, "don't
worry if you're disappointed, darling. The first time is
always traumatic."
When Catherine did not answer, Fraser raised himself
up on an elbow and looked at her, concerned, and \ said, "How do you feel?"

"Fine," she said quickly. She smiled. "You're the
best lover I ever had."

She kissed him and held him close, feeling warm and
safe until finally the hard knot inside her began to dissolve,
and a feeling of relaxation filled her, and she was
content.

"Would you like a brandy?" he asked.

"No, thanks."

"I think 111 fix myself one. It isn't every night a man
beds a virgin."

"Did you mind that?" she asked.

He looked at her with that strange, knowing look,
started to say something and changed his mind. "No,"
he said. There was a note in his voice that she did not
understand.

"Was I--?" she swallowed. "You know--all right?"

"You were lovely," he said.

"Truth?"

"Truth."

"Do you know why I almost didn't go to bed with
you?" she asked. , *

"Why?"

"I was afraid that you wouldn't want to see me
again."

He laughed aloud. "That's an old wives' tale fostered by nervous mothers who want to keep their daughters pure. Sex doesn't drive people apart, Catherine. It brings them closer together." And it was true. She had never felt so close to anyone. Outwardly she might look the same, but Catherine knew that she had changed.

The young girl who had come to this house earlier hi the evening had vanished forever and in her place was a woman. William Fraser's woman. She had finally found the mysterious Holy Grail that she had been searching for. The quest was over.

Now even the FBI would be satisfied.

1

Noelle
Paris: 1941

6

To some the Paris of 1941 was a cornucopia of riches
| and opportunity; to others it was a living hell. Gestapo
' had become a word of dread, and tales of their activ-1 ities became a chief--if whispered--topic of conversation.
The offenses against the French Jews, which had begun as almost a prankish breaking of a few shop 'Windows, had been organized by the efficient Gestapo into a system of confiscation, segregation and extermination.
On May 29, a new ordinance had been issued. ".,. a six-pointed star with the dimensions of the palm of a hand and a black edge. It is to be made of yellow cloth and bear in black lettering the inscription JUDEN. It must be worn from the age of six visibly on the left side of the chest solidly sewn to the clothing."
Not all Frenchmen were willing to be stepped on by the German boot, The Maquis, the French underround resistance, fought cleverly and hard and when caught were put to death in ingenious ways.
A young Countess whose family owned a chateau outside Chartres was forced to quarter the officers of the local German Command in her downstairs rooms for six months, during which time she had five wanted members of the Maquis hidden on the upper floors of the chateau.
The two groups never met, but in three months the Countess* hair had turned completely white.
The Germans lived as befit the status of conquerors,

but for the average Frenchman there was a shortage of
,1

everything except cold and misery. Cooking gas was rationed, and there was no beat. Parisians survived the winters by buying sawdust by the ton, storing it in one-half of their apartments and keeping the other half warm by means of special sawdust-burning stoves.

Everything was ersatz, from cigarettes and coffee to leather. The French joked that it did not matter what you ate; the taste was all the same. The French women--traditionally the most smartly dressed women in the world--wore shabby coats of sheepskin instead of wool and platform shoes of wood, so that the sound of women walking the streets of Paris resembled the clip-clop of horses' hooves.

Even baptisms were affected, for there was a shortage of sugar almonds, the traditional sweet for the baptismal ceremony, and candy shops displayed invitations to come in and register for sugar almonds. There were a few Renault taxis on the street, but the most popular form of transportation was the two-seater cabs with tandem bikes.

The theater, as always in times of prolonged crisis, flourished. People found escape from the crushing realities of everyday life in the movie houses and on the stages.

Overnight, Noelle Page had become a star. Jealous associates in the theater said that it was due solely to the power and talent of Armand Gautier, and while it was true that Gautier had launched her career, it is axiomatic among those who work hi the theater that no one can make a star except the public, that faceless, fickle, adoring, mercurial arbiter of a performer's destiny. The public adored Noelle.

As for Armand Gautier, he bitterly regretted the part he had played hi starting Noelle's career. Her need of him was now gone; all that held her to him was a whim, and he lived in constant dread of the day she would leave him. Gautier had worked hi the theater most of his life, but he had never met anyone like Noelle. She was an insatiable sponge, learning everything

him had to teach her and dea|anding more. It had been emerging to watch the metamorphosis hi her as she
from the halting, external beginnings of grasping
. part to the self-assured inner mastery of the characautier had known from the very beginning that
was going to be a star--there was never any
ion about it--but what astonished him as he opened to know her better was that stardom was not
goal. The truth was that Noelle was not even in-sted
in acting.
it first, Gautier simply could not believe it. Being a
was the top of the ladder, the sine qua nan. But to
ïlle acting was simply a stepping stone, and Gautier
not the faintest clue as to what her real goal was.
tie was a mystery, an enigma, and the deeper Gautier
the more the riddle grew, like the Chinese
|boxes that opened and revealed further boxes inside.
I Gautier prided himself on understanding people, par-women,
and the fact that he knew absolutely
I nothing about the woman he lived with and loved
Prove hhn frantic. He asked Noelle to marry turn, and
|she said, "Yes, Armand," and he knew that she meant
nothing by it, that it meant no more to her than her engagement
to Philippe Sorel or God alone knew how
[many other men in her past life. He realized that the
I marriage would never take place. When Noelle was
ready, she would move on.
Gautier was sure that every man who met her tried ' to persuade her to go to bed with him. He also knew
from his envious friends that none of them had succeeded.
"You lucky son of a bitch," one of his friends had
said, "Yon must be hung like UN taureau. I offered her
a yacht, her own chateau and a staff of servants in Cap
d'Antibes, and she laughed at me."
Another friend, a banker, told him, "I have finally
found the first thing money cannot buy."
"Noelle?"
The banker nodded. "That's right I told her to
name her price. She was áot interested. What is it you
'have for her, my friend?"
Armand Gautier wished he knew.

Gautier remembered when he had found the first
play for her. He had read no more than a dozen pages
when he knew it was exactly what he was looking for.
It was a tour de force, a drama about a woman whose
husband had gone to war. A soldier appeared at her

home one day telling her that he was a comrade of her husband with whom he had served on the Russian Front. As the play developed, the woman fell in love with the soldier, unaware that he was a psychopathic Mller and that her life was in danger. It was a great acting role for the wife, and Gautier agreed to direct it immediately, on condition that Noelle Page play the lead. The backers were reluctant to star an unknown but agreed to have her audition for them. Gautier hurried home to bring the news to Noelle. She had come to him because she wanted to be a star and now he was going to give her her wish. He told himself this would bring them closer together, would make her really love him. They would get married and he would possess her, always.

But when Gautier had told her the news, Noelle had merely looked up at him and said, "That is wonderful, Armand, thank you." In exactly the same tone of voice in which she might have thanked him for telling her the correct time or lighting her cigarette.

Gautier watched her for a long moment, knowing that in some strange way Noelle was sick, that some emotion in her had either died, or had never been alive and that no one would ever possess her. He knew this and yet he could not really believe it, because what he saw was a beautiful, affectionate girl who happily catered to his every whim and asked for nothing in return.

Because he loved her, Gautier put his doubts aside, and they went to work on the play.

Noelle was brilliant at the audition and got the part

ithout questicm, as Gautier had known she would, the play opened in Paris two months later, No-became, overnight, the biggest star in France. The itics had been prepared to attack the play and Noelle was they were aware that Gautier had put his MIS, an inexperienced actress, in the lead, and it was a ation too delicious for them to pass up. But she had ^completely captivated them. They searched for new superlatives to describe her performance and her beauty.

The play was a complete sellout.

Every night after the performance, Noelfe's dressing room was filled with visitors. She saw everyone: shoe clerks, soldiers, millionaires, shop girls, treating them all with the same patient courtesy. Gautier would watch in amazement It is almost as though she were a Princess receiving her subjects, he thought

Over a period of a year Noelle received three letters from Marseille. She tore them up, unopened, and finally they stopped coming.

In the spring, Noelle starred in a motion picture that Armand Gautier directed, and when it was released, her fame spread. Gautier marveled at Noelle's patience hi giving interviews and being photographed. Most stars hated it and did it either to help increase their box office value or for reasons of ego. In Noelle's case, she was indifferent to both motivations. She would change the subject when Gautier questioned her about why she was willing to pass up a chance to rest in the South of France in order to stay in a cold, rainy Paris to do tiresome poses for Le Matin, La Petite Parisienne or L'llustration. It was just as well, for Gautier would have been stunned if he had known her real reason. Noelle's motivation was very simple.

Everything she did was for Larry Douglas.

When Noelle posed for photographs, she visualized her former lover picking up a magazine and recognizing her picture. When she played a scene hi a movie, she saw Larry Douglas sitting hi a theater one night in some far-off country, watching her. Her work was a re
I

minder to him, a message from the past, a signal that would one day bring him back to her; and that was all Noelle wanted, for him to come back to her, so that she could destroy him.

Thanks to Christian Barbet, Noelle had an evergrowing scrapbook on Larry Douglas. The little detective had moved from his shabby offices to a large, luxurious suite on the rue Richer, near the Folies-Berere.

The first time Noelle had gone to see bun hi his new offices, Barbet had grinned at her surprised expression and said, "I got it cheap. These offices were occupied by a Jew."

"You said you had some news for me," Noelle said curtly.

The smirk left Barbet's face. "Ah yes." He did have news. It was difficult getting information from England under the very nose of the Nazis, but Barbet had found ways. He bribed sailors on neutral ships to smuggle in letters from an agency in London. But that was only one of his sources. He appealed to the patriotism of the French underground, the humanity of the International Red Cross and the cupidity of black marketeers with overseas connections. To each of them he told a different story, and the flow of information kept coming in.

He picked up a report on his desk. "Your friend was shot down over the English Channel," he said without preamble. Out of the corner of his eye he watched Noelle's face, waiting for her aloof facade to crumble, taking enjoyment in the pain he was inflicting. But Noelle's expression never changed. She looked at him and said confidently, "He was rescued." Barbet stared at

her and swallowed and answered reluctantly, "Well, yes. He was picked up by a British Rescue boat." And wondered how the devil she could have known. Everything about this woman baffled him, and he hated her as a client and was tempted to drop her, but Barbet knew that that would have been stupid. He had attempted once to make a pass at her, hinting that his services would be less expensive, but No 17}

lie had rebuffed him in a manner that made him feel a clumsy loot, and he would never forgive her for bat. One day, Barbet promised himself quietly, one ay this tight-assed bitch would pay.
Now, as Noelle stood in his office, a look of distaste her beautiful face, Barbet hurriedly went on with ; report, eager to get rid of her.
"His squadron has moved to Kirton, in Lincolnshire. they're flying Hurricanes and--" Noel was interested him something else.
"His engagement to the Admiral's daughter," she |said, "it's off, isn't it?"
Barbet looked up in surprise and mumbled, "Yes. | She found out about some of his other women." It was him almost as though Noelle had already seen the report
' She had not, of course, but it did not matter. The bond him of hatred that tied Noelle to Larry Douglas was so I strong it seemed that nothing important could ever happen to him without her knowing it. Noelle took the report and left When she returned home she read it over slowly, then carefully filed it among the other reports and locked it up where it could not be found.
One Friday night after a performance, Noelle was hi her dressing room at the theater creaming off her makeup, when there was a knock at the door, and Marius, the elderly, crippled stage doorman, entered.
"Pardon, Miss Page, a gentleman asked me to bring these to you."
Noelle glanced up in the mirror and saw that he was carrying an enormous bouquet of red roses in an exquisite vase.
"Set it down there, Marius," Noelle said, and she watched as he carefully placed the vase of roses on a table.
It was late November and no one in Paris had seen roses for more than three months. There must have been four dozen of them, ruby red, long-stemmed, wet with dew. Curious, Noelle walked over and picked up the card. It read: "To the lovely Noel Page. Would you have supper with me? Cteneral Hans Scheider."
The vase that the flowers rested in was delft, intricately

patterned and very expensive. General Scheider
had gone to a great deal of trouble.
"He would like an answer," the stage doorman said.
"Tell him I never eat supper and take these home to
your wife."
He stared at her in surprise. "But the General . . ."
«That is all."
Marius nodded his head, picked up the vase and
hurried out. Noelle knew that he would rush to spread
the story of how she had defied a German general. It
had happened before with other German officials, and
the French people regarded her as some kind of heroine.
It was ridiculous. The truth of the matter was
that Noelle had nothing against the Nazis, she was
merely indifferent to them. They were not a part of her
life or her plans, and she simply tolerated them, awaiting
the day when they would return home. She knew
that if she became involved with any Germans it would
hurt her. Not now, perhaps, but it was not the present
Noelle was concerned about; it was the future. She
thought that the idea of the Third Reich ruling for one
thousand years was merde. Any student of history
knew that eventually all conquerors were conquered.
In the meantime she would do nothing that would allow
her fellow Frenchmen to turn on her when the
Germans were finally ousted. She was totally untouched
by the Nazi occupation and when the subject
came up--as it constantly did--Noelle avoided any
discussion about it
Fascinated by her attitude, Armand Gautier often
tried to draw her out on the subject.
"Don't you care that the Nazis have conquered
France?" he would ask her.
"Would it matter if I cared?"
"That's not the point. If everyone felt as you do, we
would be damned."
"We are damned anyway, are we not?"
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"Not if we believe in free will. Do you think our life
is ordained from the time we ax» born?"
'To some degree. We are given bodies, our birthplace
and our station in life, but that does not mean
that we cannot change. We can become anything we
want to be."
"My point exactly. That is why we must fight the
Nazis."
She looked at him. "Because God is on our side?"
"Yes," he replied.
"If there is a God," Noelle answered reasonably,
"and He created them, then He must be on their side,

In October, the first anniversary of Noelle's play, the backers gave a party for the cast at Tour d'Argent. There was a mixture of actors, bankers and influential businessmen. The guests were mostly French, but there were a dozen Germans at the party, a few of them in uniform, all of them except one with French girls. The exception was a German officer in his forties, with a long, lean intelligent face, deep green eyes and a trim, athletic body. A narrow scar ran from his cheekbone to his chin. Noelle was aware that he had been watching her all evening although he had not come near her.
"Who is that man?" she casually asked one of the hosts.
He glanced over at the officer who was sitting alone at a table sipping champagne, then turned to Noelle in surprise. "It is strange you should ask. I thought he was a friend of yours. That is General Hans Scheider. He is on the General Staff." Noelle remembered the roses and the card. "Why did you think he was a friend of mine?" she asked.
The man appeared flustered. "I naturally assumed ... I mean, every play and motion picture produced m France must be approved by the Germans. When the censor tried to stop your new movie from being made, the General personally stepped in and gave his approvaL"
At that moment Armand Gautier brought someone to meet Noelle and the conversation changed.
Noelle paid no further attention to General Scheider.
The next evening when she arrived at her dressing room, there was one rose in a small vase with a little card that said: "Perhaps we should start smaller. May I see you? Hans Scheider."
Noelle tore up the note and threw the flower into the wastebasket

After that night Noelle became aware that at almost every party she and Armand Gautier attended, General Scheider was there. He always remained hi the background watching her. It happened too often to be a coincidence.
Noelle realized that he must be going to a great deal of trouble to keep track of her movements and to get himself invitations to places where she would be.
She wondered why he was so interested, but it was an idle speculation and it did not really bother her. Occasionally Noelle would amuse herself by accepting an invitation and not showing up, then checking with the hostess the next day to see if General Scheider had been there. The answer was always "Yes."
Despite the swift and lethal punishment meted out by the Nazis to anyone who opposed them, sabotage continued to flourish in Paris. In addition to the Maquis

there were dozens of small groups of freedom-loving French who risked their lives to fight the enemy with whatever weapons were at hand. They murdered German soldiers when they could catch them off guard, blew up supply trucks and mined bridges and trams. Their activities were denounced in the controlled daily press as deeds of infamy, but to the loyal French the deeds of infamy were glorious exploits. The name of one man kept cropping up in the newspapers--he was nicknamed Le Cafard, the cockroach, because he seemed to scurry around everywhere, and the Gestapo was unable to catch him. No one knew who he was. Some believed that he was. an Englishman living in Paris; another theory held that he was an agent of General De Gaulle, the leader of the Free French Forces; and some even said that he was a disaffected German. Whoever he was, drawings of cockroaches were beginning to spring up all over Paris, on buildings, sidewalks, and even inside German Army headquarters. The Gestapo was concentrating its efforts on catching him. Of one fact there was no doubt Le Cafard had become an instant folk hero.

On a rainy afternoon in December, Noelle attended the opening of an art exhibition of a young artist whom she and Armand knew. The exhibit was held in a gallery on the rue du Faubourg-St.-Honore. The room was crowded. Many celebrities were in attendance and photographers were everywhere. As Noelle walked around, moving from painting to painting, she felt spmeone touch her arm. She turned and found herself looking into the face of Madame Rose. It took Noelle a moment to recognize her. The familiar, ugly face was the same, and yet it seemed twenty years older, as though through some alchemy in time she had become her own mother. She wore a big black cape, and somewhere in the back of Noelle's consciousness was the fleeting thought that she was not wearing the prescribed yellow JUDEN star,

Noelle started to speak, but the older woman stopped her by squeezing her arm.

"Could you meet me?" she asked in a barely audible voice. "Les Deux Magots."

Before Noelle could reply, Madame Rose melted into the crowd, and Noelle was surrounded by photographers. As she posed and smiled for them, Noelle was remembering Madame Rose and her nephew, Israel Katz. They had both been kind to her in a time of need. Israel had saved her life twice. Noelle wondered what Madame Rose wanted. Money, probably.

Twenty minutes later Noelle slipped away and took a taxi to the place St. Germain they Prés. It had been raining on and off all day, and now the rain had started

to torn into a cold, driving sleet. As her taxi pulled up in front of Les Deux Magots and Noelle stepped out into the biting cold, a man in a raincoat and wide-brimmed hat appeared at her side out of nowhere. It took Noelle a moment to recognize him. Like his aunt, he looked older, but the change went deeper than that There was an authority, a strength that had not been there before. Israel Katz was thinner than when she had last seen him, and his eyes were hollowed, as though he had not slept in days. Noelle noticed that he was not wearing the yellow six-pointed Jewish star.

"Let's get out of the rain," Israel Katz said.

He took Noelle's arm and led her inside. There were half a dozen customers in the cafe, all French. Israel led Noelle to a table in a back corner.

"Would you like something to drink?" he asked.

"No, thank you."

He took off his rain-soaked hat, and Noelle studied his face. She knew instantly that he had not called her here to ask for money. He was watching her.

"You're still beautiful, Noelle," he said quietly. "he seen all of your movies and plays. You're a great actress."

"Why didn't you ever come backstage?"

Israel hesitated, then grinned shyly. "I didn't want to embarrass you."

Noelle stared at him a moment before she realized what he meant. To her, "Juden" was just a word that appeared in newspapers from time to time, and it meant nothing hi her life; but what must it be like to live that word, to be a Jew in a country sworn to wipe you out, exterminate you, particularly when it was your own motherland.

"I choose my own friends," Noelle replied. "No one tells me whom to see."

Israel smiled wryly. "Don't waste your courage," he

advised. "Use it where it can help."

"Tell me about you," she said.

He shrugged. "I live a very unglamorous life. I became a surgeon. I studied under Dr. Angibouste. Have you heard of him?"

"No."

"He's a great heart surgeon. He made me his protege. Then the Nazis took away my license to practice medicine." He held up his beautifully sculptured hands and examined them as though they belonged to someone else. "So I became a carpenter."

She looked at him for a long moment. "Is that all?" she asked.

Israel studied her in surprise. "Of course," he said. "Why?"

Noelle dismissed the thought at the back of her
mind.
"Nothing. Why did you want to see me?"
He leaned closer to her and lowered his voice. 1
need a favor. A friend--"
At that moment, the door opened and four German
soldiers in gray-green uniforms walked into the bistro,
led by a corporal. .The corporal called out hi a loud
voice: "Achtung! We wish to see your identity papers."
Israel Kate stiffened, and it was as though a mask
fell into place. Noelle saw his right hand slide into the
pocket of his overcoat. His eyes flickered toward the
narrow passageway that led to an exit in the rear, but
one of the soldiers was already moving toward it,
blocking it. Israel said in a low urgent voice, "Get
away from me. Walk out the front door. Now."
"Why?" Noelle demanded.
The Germans were examining the identification papers
of some customers at a table near the entrance.
'"Don't ask questions," he commanded. "Just go."
Noelle hesitated a moment, then rose to her feet and
started toward the door. The soldiers were moving on
to the next table. Israel had pushed his chair back to

give himself more freedom. The movement attracted
die attention of two of the soldiers. They walked over
to him.
"Identity papers."
Somehow Noelle knew that it was Israel the soldiers
were looking for and that he was going to try to escape
and they would kill him. He had no chance.
She turned and called out to him, "Francois! We are
going to be late for the theater. Pay the check and let's
go."
The soldiers looked at her in surprise. Noelle started
back toward the table.
Corporal Schultz moved to face her. He was a
blond, apple-cheeked boy in his early twenties. "Are
you with MIS man, Noel?" he asked.
"Of course I am! Haven't you anything better to do
man pester honest French citizens?" Noelle demanded,
angrily.
"I am sorry, my good Noel, but..."
"I am not your good NoelI" Noelle snapped. 1
am Noelle Page. I am starring at the Variétés Theatre,
and this man is my costar. Tonight, when I am having
supper with my dear friend, General Hans Scheider, I
shall inform him of your behavior this afternoon and
he will be furious with you."
Noelle saw the look of recognition come into the

corporal's eyes, but whether it was a recognition of her
name or General Scheider's, she could not be sure.
"I--I am sorry, FrSulein," he stammered. "Of
course I recognize you." He turned to Israel Katz, who
sat there silently, his hand in his coat pocket "I do not
recognize this gentleman."
"You would if you barbarians ever went to the (heater,"
said Noelle with stinging contempt "Are we under
arrest or may we leave?"
The young corporal was aware of everyone's eyes on
him. He had to make an instant decision. "Of course
the Noel and her friend are not under arrest," he
said. "I apologize 81 have inconvenienced you. I--"
Israel Katz looked up at the soldier and Said coolly,
"It's raining outside, Corporal. I wonder if one of your
men could find us a taxi."
"Of course. At once."
Israel got into the taxi with Noelle, and the German
corporal stood in the rain watching as they drove
away. When the taxi stopped for a traffic light three
blocks away, Israel opened the door, squeezed Noelle's
hand once and disappeared without a word into the
night.
At seven o'clock that evening when Noelle walked
into her theater dressing room, there were two men
waiting for her. One of them was the young German
corporal from the bistro that afternoon. The other was
in mufti. He was an albino, completely hairless, with
pink eyes, and he somehow reminded Noelle of an unformed
baby. He was hi his thirties, with a moon face.
His voice was high-pitched and almost laughably feminine,
but there was an ineffable quality, a deadliness
about him that was chilling. "Miss Noelle Page?"
"Yes."
"I am Colonel Kurt Mueller, Gestapo. I believe you
have met Corporal Schultz."
Noelle turned to the corporal, indifferently, "No, I
don't believe I have."
"At the kaffehause this afternoon," the corporal said
helpfully.
Noelle turned to Mueller. "I meet so many people."
The colonel nodded. "It must be difficult to remember
everyone when you have so many friends,
FrSulein."
She nodded. "Exactly."
"Fear example, this friend you were with (his afternoon."
He paused, watching Noel's eyes. "You told
Corporal Schultz that he is starring hi the show with
you?"
Noelle looked at the Gestapo man in surprise. "The
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corporal must have misunderstood me."
"Nein, Noel," the corporal replied indignantly,
"You said . . ."
The colonel turned to give him a freezing look, and
the corporal's mouth snapped closed in mid-sentence.
"Perhaps," said Kurt Mueller amiably. "This kind of
thing can happen so easily when one is trying to communicate
in a foreign language."
"That is true," said Noelle quickly.
Out of the corner of her eye she saw the corporal's
face redden with anger, but he kept his mouth shut
"I'm sorry to have troubled you over nothing," Kurt
Mueller said.
Noelle felt her shoulders relax and she suddenly realized
how tense she had been.
"That's perfectly all right," she said. "Perhaps I can
give you tickets for the play."
"I have seen it," the Gestapo man said, "and Corporal
Schultz has already bought his ticket But thank
you."
he started toward the door, then paused. "When
you called Corporal Schultz a barbarian, he decided to
buy a ticket this evening to see your performance.
When he looked at the actors' photographs in the
lobby, he did not see the picture of your friend from
the kaffehause. That is when he called me."
Noelle's heart began to beat faster.
"Just for the record, Mademoiselle. If he was not
your costar, who was he?"
"A--a friend."
"His name?" The high-pitched voice was still soft,
but it had become dangerous.
"What difference does it make?" Noelle asked.
"Your friend answers the description of a criminal
we are looking for. He was reported seen in the vicinity
of the place St. Germain they Prés this afternoon."
Noelle stood watching him, her mind racing.
"What is the name of your friend?" Colonel Mueller's
voice was insistent
"I--I don't know."
"Ah, then he was a stranger?"
"Yes."
He stared at her, his cold pink eyes drilling into
hers. "You were sitting with him. You stopped the soldiers
from looking at his papers. Why?"
"I felt sorry for him," Noelle said. "He came up to
me ..."
"Where?"
Noelle thought quickly. Someone could have seen
them going into the bistro together. "Outside the cafe.

He told me that the soldiers were looking for him because he had stolen some groceries for his wife and children. It seemed such a minor crime that I ..." She looked up at Mueller appealingly, "I helped him."
Mueller studied her a moment and nodded his head admiringly. "I can understand why you are such a big star." The smile died from his face, and when he spoke again his voice was even softer. "Let me give you some advice, Mademoiselle Page. We wish to be on good terms with you French. We want you to be our friends as well as our allies. But anyone who helps our enemy becomes our enemy. We will catch your friend, Mademoiselle, and when we do, we will question him, and I promise you he will talk."
"I have nothing to be afraid of," Noelle said.
"You are wrong." She could barely hear him. "You have me to be afraid of." Colonel Mueller nodded to the corporal and started toward the door again. He turned once more. "If you hear from your friend, you will report it to me at once. If you fail to do so . . ."
He smiled at her. And the two men were gone.
Noelle sank into a chair, drained. She was aware that she had not been convincing, but she had been caught completely off guard. She had been so sure that the incident had been forgotten. She remembered now some of the stories she had heard about the Gestapo, and a small chill went through her. Supposing they caught Israel Katz and he did talk. He could tell them

that they were old friends, that Noelle had lied about not knowing him. But surely that could not be important. Unless ... the name she had thought of hi the restaurant popped into her mind again. Le Cafard.

Hah! an hour later when Noelle went on stage, she managed to put everything out of her mind but the character she was playing. It was an appreciative audience and as she took her curtain calls, she received a tremendous ovation. She could still hear the applause as she walked back to her dressing room and opened the door. Seated in a chair was General Hans Scheider. He rose to his feet as Noelle entered and said politely, "I was informed that we have a supper date this evening."

They had supper at Le Fruit Perdu along the Seine, about twenty miles outside of Paris. They had been driven there by the General's chauffeur in a shiny,

black limousine. The rain had stopped, and the night was cool and pleasant. The General had made no reference to the day's incident until they had finished eating. Noelle's first impulse had been not to go with him, but she decided that it was necessary to learn how much the Germans really knew and how much trouble she might be in.

"I received a call from Gestapo headquarters this afternoon," General Scheider was saying. "They informed me that you told a Corporal Schultz that you were having supper with me this evening." Noelle watched him, saying nothing. He went on. "I decided that it would be most unpleasant for you if I said 'No,' and most pleasant for me if I said 'Yes.'" He smiled. "So here we are."

"This is all so ridiculous," Noelle protested. "Helping a poor man who stole some groc--"

"Don't!" The General's voice was sharp. Noelle looked at him in surprise. "Don't make the mistake of believing that all Germans are fools. And do not underestimate the Gestapo."

Noelle said, "They have nothing to do with me, General."

He toyed with the stem of his wine glass. "Colonel Mueller suspects you of having helped a man he wants very badly. If that is true, you are in a great deal of trouble. Colonel Mueller neither forgives nor forgets." He looked at Noelle. "On the other hand," he said carefully, "if you should not see your friend again, this whole thing could simply blow over. Would you like a cocnac?"

"Please," Noelle said.

He ordered two Napoleon brandies. "How long have you been living with Armand Gautier?"

"I am sure you know the answer to that," Noelle replied.

General Scheider smiled. "As a matter of fact, I do. What I really wanted to ask you is why you refused to have dinner with me before. Was it because of Gautier?"

Noelle shook her head. "No."

"I see," he said stiffly. There was a note in his voice that surprised her.

"Paris is full of women," Noelle said. "I am sure you could have your pick."

"You don't know me,"'the General said quietly, "or you wouldn't have said that." He sounded embarrassed. "I have a wife and child in Berlin. 1 love them very much, but I have been away from them for more than a year now, and I have no idea when I will see them again."

"Who forced you to come to Paris?" Noelle asked cruelly.
"I was not making a bid for sympathy. I just wanted to explain myself a little.'I am not a promiscuous man. The first time I saw you on the stage," he said, "something happened to me. I felt I wanted to know you very much. I would like us to be good friends."
There was a quiet dignity about the way he spoke.
"I can promise nothing," Noelle said.
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He nodded. "I understand "
But of course he did not. Because Noelle intended never to see him again. General Scheider tactfully changed the conversation and they talked of acting and the theater, and Noelle found him surprisingly knowledgeable. He had an eclectic mind and a deep intelligence. Casually he ranged from topic to topic, pointing out the mutual interests that the two of them shared. It was a skillful performance and Noelle was amused. He had gone to a great deal of trouble to learn about her background. He looked every inch the German General in his olive-green uniform, strong and authoritative, but there was a gentleness that bespoke another kind of man altogether, an intellectual quality that belonged to the scholar rather than the soldier. And yet there was the scar running across his face.
"How did you get your scar?" Noelle asked.
He ran his finger along the deep incision. "I was in a duel many years ago," he shrugged. "In German, we call this wildfleisch--it means 'proud skin.'"
They discussed the Nazi philosophy.
"We are not monsters," General Scheider stated. "And we have no wish to rule the world. But neither do we intend to sit still and be punished any longer for a war we lost more than twenty years ago. The Treaty of Versailles is a bondage that the German people have finally broken out of."
They spoke of the occupation of Paris. "It was not the fault of your French soldiers that it was so easy for us," General Scheider said. "A good deal of the re* sponsibility must fall on the shoulders of Napoleon the
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"You're joking," Noelle replied.
"I am perfectly serious," he assured her. "In the days of Napoleon» the mobs were constantly using the tangled, twisted streets of Paris for barricades and ambushes against his soldiers. In order to stop them, he commissioned Baron Eugene George's Haussmann to straighten out the streets mid fill the city with nice,

wide boulevards." He smiled. "The boulevards down
which our troops marched. I am afraid history will not
be kind to planner Haussmann."
After dinner, driving back to Paris, he asked, "Are
you in love with Armand Gautier?"
His tone was casual, but Noelle had the feeling that
her answer was important to him.
"No," she said slowly.
He nodded, satisfied. "I did not think so. I believe I
could make you very happy."
"As happy as you make your wife?"
General Scheider stiffened for a moment as though he had been struck and then
turned to look at Noelle.
"I can be a good friend," he said quietly. "Let us
hope that you and I are never enemies."
When Noelle returned to the apartment, it was almost
3:00 and., and Armand Gautier was waiting for
her in a state of agitation.
"Where the hell have you been?" he demanded, as
she walked in the door.
"I had an engagement." Noelle's eyes moved past
him into the room. It looked as though a cyclone had
struck. Desk drawers were open and the contents
strewn around the room. The closets had been ransacked,
a lamp had been overturned and a small table
lay on its side, one leg broken.
"What happened?" Noelle asked.
"The Gestapo was here! My God, Noelle, what have
you been up to?"
"Nothing."
"Then why would they do this?"
Noelle began to move around the room, straightening
the furniture, thinking hard. Gautier grabbed her
shoulders and turned her around. "I want to know
what's happening."
She took a deep breath. "All right"
She told him of the meeting with Israel Katz, leaving

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out his name and the conversation later with Colonel
Mueller. "I don't know that my friend is Le Cafard, but it is possible."

Gautier sank into a chair, stunned. "My God!" he exclaimed. "I don't care who he is! I don't want you to have anything more to do with him. We could both be destroyed because of this. I hate the Germans as much as you do ..." He stopped, not sure whether Noelle hated the Germans or not. He began again, "Cherie, as long as the Germans are making the rules, we must live under them. Neither of us can afford to get involved with the Gestapo. This Jew--what did you say his name was?"
"I didn't say."
He looked at her a moment "Was he your lover?"
"No, Armand."
"Does he mean anything to you?"
"No."
"Well, then." Gautier sounded relieved. "I don't think we have anything to worry about. They can't blame you if you had one accidental meeting with him. If you don't see him again, they'll forget the whole thing."
"Of course they with," Noelle said.
On the way to the theater the next evening, Noelle was followed by two Gestapo men.

From that day on Noelle was followed everywhere she went. It first began as a feeling, a premonition that she was being stared at. Noelle would turn and see in a crowd a young Teutonic-looking man in civilian clothes who seemed to be paying no attention to her. Later, the feeling would return, and this time it would be another young Teutonic-looking man. It was always someone different and though they were in plain clothes, they wore a uniform that was distinctively theirs: an attitude of contempt, superiority and cruelty, and the emanations were unmistakable.
Noelle said nothing to Gautier about what was hap pening for she saw no point in alarming him any further.
The incident with the Gestapo hi the apartment had made him very nervous. He could talk of nothing but what the Germans could do to both his and Noelle's career if they wished to, and Noelle was aware that he was right. One had only to look at the daily newspapers to know that the Nazis showed no mercy to their enemies. There had been several telephone messages from General Scheider, but Noelle had ignored them. If she did not want the Nazis as an enemy, neither did she want them as a friend. She decided that she would remain like Switzerland: neutral. The Israel Katzes of the world would have to take care of themselves. Noelle was mildly curious about what he had wanted from her, but she had no intention of getting involved.
Two weeks after Noelle had seen Israel Katz, the newspapers carried a front-page story that the Gestapo

had caught a group of saboteurs headed by Le Cafard. Noelle read all the stories carefully, but nothing was mentioned about whether Le Cafard himself had been captured. She remembered Israel Katz's face when the Germans had started to close hi on him, and she knew that he would never let them take him alive. Of course, Noelle told herself, it could be my fantasy. He is probably a harmless carpenter, as he said. But if he was harmless, why was the Gestapo so interested hi him? Was he Le Cafard? And had he been captured, or had he escaped? Noelle walked over to the window of her apartment that faced on the Avenue Martigny. Two black rain-coated figures stood under a streetlamp, waiting. For what? Noelle began to feel the sense of alarm that Gautier felt, but with it came a feeling of anger. She remembered Colonel Mueller's words: You have me to be afraid of. It was a challenge. Noelle had the feeling she was going to hear from Israel Katz again.

The message came the next morning from--of all

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the unlikely people--her concierge. He was a small, rheumy-eyed man in his seventies, with a wizened, leathery face and no lower teeth, so that it was difficult to understand him when he spoke. When Noelle rang for the elevator he was waiting inside. They rode down together, and as they neared the lobby, he mumbled, "The birthday cake you ordered is ready at the bakery at rue de Passy."

Noelle stared at him a moment, not sure whether she had heard him correctly» then said, "I didn't order any cake."

"Rue de Passy," he repeated stubbornly.

And NoeQe suddenly understood. Even then, she would have done nothing about it if she had not seen the two Gestapo agents waiting for her across the street. To be followed around like a criminal! The two men were in conversation. They had not seen her yet. Angrily Noelle turned to the concierge and said, "Where is the service entrance?"

"This way, Mam'selle."

Noelle followed him through a back corridor, down a flight of stairs to the basement and out to an alley. Three minutes later she was hi a taxi, on her way to meet Israel Katz.

The bakery was an ordinary-looking shop in a rundown, middle-class neighborhood. The lettering on the window read BOULANGERIE, and the letters were flaked and chipped. Noelle opened the door and stepped inside. She was greeted by a small dumpling of a woman in a spotless white apron.

"Yes, Mademoiselle?"

Noelle hesitated. There was still time to leave, still time to turn back and not get involved in something dangerous that was none of her business.

The woman was waiting.

"You--you have a birthday cake for me," Noelle said, feeling foolish at the game-playing, as though somehow the gravity of what was happening was de 167

meaned by the childish artifices $iat were employed.
The woman nodded. "It is ready, Miss Page." She put a CLOSED sign on the door, locked it and said,
"This way."
He was lying on a cot in the small back room of the bakery, his face a mask of pain, bathed in perspiration. The sheet twisted around him was soaked in blood, and there wa&a large tourniquet around his left knee.
"Israel."
He moved to face the door, and the sheet fell away, revealing a sodden pulp of mashed bone and flesh where his knee had been.
"What happened?" Noelle asked.
He tried to smile but did not quite make it. His voice was hoarse and strained with pain. "They stepped on Le Cafard, but we're not easy to kill."
So she had been correct. "I read about it," Noelle said. "Are you going to be all right?"
Israel took a deep painful breath and nodded. His words came in labored gasps.
"The Gestapo is turning Paris upside down looking for me. My only chance is to get out of the city.... they I can get to Le Havre, I have friends who will help me get on a boat out of the country."

"Can't you get a friend to drive you out of Paris?**
Noelle asked. "You could hide in the back of a
truck---"
Israel shook his head weakly. "Road blocks. Not a
mouse can get out of Paris."
Not even UN Cafard, Noelle thought "Can you
travel with that leg?" she asked, stalling for time, trying
to come to a decision.
His lips tightened in the rictus of a smile.
"I'm not going to travel with this leg," Israel said.
Noelle looked at him, not understanding, and at that
moment the door opened and a large, heavy-shouldered,
bearded man entered. In his hand he carried an
ax. He walked up to the bed and pulled back the sheet,
and Noelle felt the blood drain from her face. She

thought of General Scheider and the hairless albino
from the Gestapo and what they would do to her if they caught her.
"I will help you,"*Noelle said.

CATHERINE

Washington-Hollywood: 1941

It seemed to Catherine Alexander that her life had entered
a new phase, as though somehow she had
climbed to some higher emotional level, a heady and
exhilarating peak. When Bill Fraser was in town, they
had dinner together every night and went to concerts
or the theater or the opera. He found a small, charm» ing apartment for her
near Arlington. He wanted to
pay her rent, but Catherine insisted on paying it herself.
He bought her clothes and jewelry. She had resisted
at first, embarrassed by some deeply ingrained Protestant
ethic, but it had given Fraser such obvious pleasure
that finally Catherine had stopped arguing about
it

Whether you like it or not, she thought, you're a
mistress. It had always been a loaded word for her,
filled with connotations of cheap, slinky women in
backstreet apartments, living out lives of emotional
frustration. But now that it was happening to her, Catherine
found that it was not really tike that at all. It
just meant that she was sleeping with the man she
loVed. It did not feel dirty or sordid, it felt perfectly
natural. It's interesting, she thought, how the things

that other people do seem so horrible, arid yet when you're doing them they seem so right. When you are reading about the sexual experiences of someone else, it's True Confessions, but when ifs you ifs the Ladies' Home Journal.

Fraser was a thoughtful and understanding companion, and it was as though they had been together al

ways. Catherine could predict his reactions to almost any situation and knew his every mood. Contrary to what Fraser had said, sex with him did not become more exciting, but Catherine told herself that sex was only a small part of a relationship. She was not a schoolgirl who needed constant titillation, she was a mature woman. Give or take a little, she thought, wryly.

Eraser's advertising agency was being run in his absence by Wallace Turner, a senior account executive.

William Fraser tried to have as little to do with the business as possible, so he could devote himself to his job in Washington, but whenever a major problem «rose at the agency and they needed his advice, Fraser got in the habit of .discussing it with Catherine, using her as a sounding board. He found that she had a natural flair for the business. Catherine often came up with ideas for campaigns that proved very effective.

"If I weren't so selfish, Catherine," Fraser said one night at dinner, Td put you in the agency and turn you loose on some of our accounts." He covered her hand with his. "I'd miss you too much," he added "I want you here with me."

"I want to be here, Bill. I'm very happy with things the way they are." And it was true. She had thought that if she were ever in a situation like this, she would want desperately to get married, but somehow there seemed no urgency about it In every important way they were already married.

One afternoon as Catherine was finishing some work, Fraser walked into her office.

"How would you like to take a drive out to the country tonight?" he asked.

"Love it. Where are we going?"

To Virginia. We're having dinner with my parents."

Catherine looked up at him in surprise. "Do they know about us?" she asked.

"Not everything," he grinned. "Just that I have a fantastic young assistant and I'm bringing her to dinner."

If she felt a pang of disappointment, she did not let it show on her face. "Fine," she said. "I'll stop by the apartment and change."

till pick you up at seven o'clock."

"Date."

The Erasers' house, set in the beautiful rolling hills of Virginia, was a large Colonial farmhouse with sixty acres of vivid green grass and farmland surrounding it. The house dated back to seventeen hundred.
"I've never seen anything like it," Catherine marveled.
"It's one of the best breeding farms in America," Fraser informed her.
The car drove past a corral filled with beautiful horses, past the neatly kept paddocks and the caretaker's cottage.
"It's Like another world," Catherine exclaimed. "I envy your growing up here."
"Do you think you'd like living on a farm?"
"This isn't exactly a farm," she said dryly. "It's mote like owning your own country."
They bad arrived in front of the house.
Fraser turned to her. "My mother and father are a little formal," he warned, "but there's nothing for you to worry about. Just be yourself. Nervous?"
"No," Catherine said. "Panicky." And as she said it, she realized with a sense of astonishment that she was lying. In the classic tradition of all girls about to meet the parents of the man they loved, she should have been petrified. But she felt nothing except curiosity.
There was no time to wonder about that now. They were getting out of the car and a butler hi full livery was opening the door, greeting them with a welcoming smile.
Colonel Fraser and his lady could have been living out of the pages of an ante-bellum story book. The first tiling that struck Catherine was how old and fragile-looking they were. Colonel Fraser was a pale carbon of what had once been a handsome, vital man. He reminded Catherine very strongly of someone, and with a shock, she realized who it was: an old, worn-out version of his son. The colonel had sparse white hair and walked with a painful stoop. His eyes were pale blue and his once-powerful hands were gnarled with arthritis. His wife had the look of an aristocrat and still retained traces of a girlish beauty. She was gracious and warm to Catherine.
In spite of what Fraser had told her, Catherine had the feeling that she was there for their inspection. The colonel and his wife spent the evening questioning her. They were very discreet but thorough. Catherine told them about her parents and her childhood, and when she talked about moving from school to school, she made it sound like adventurous fun, rather than the agony it had been. As she talked she could see Bill Fraser proudly beaming at her. Dinner was superb. They dined by candlelight in a large, old-fashioned dining

room with a real marble fireplace and liveried servants. Old silver, old money and old wine. She looked at Bill
Fraser and a wave of warm gratitude went through her. She had the feeling that this kind of life could be hers if she wanted it. She knew that Fraser loved her, and 'she loved him. And yet there was something missing: a sense of excitement. Possibly, she thought, I'm expecting too much. I've probably been warped by Gary Cooper, Humphrey Bogart and Spencer Tracy! Love isn't
a knight in shining armor. Ifs a gentleman farmer in a gray tweed suit. Damn all those movies and books! As she looked at the colonel, she could see Fraser twenty years hence, looking exactly the same as his father. She was very quiet during the rest of the evening.
On the way home Fraser asked, "Did you enjoy the evening?"
"Very much. I liked your parents."

"They liked you, too."
Tm glad." And she was. Except for the vaguely disquieting thought hi the back of her mind that somehow she should have been more nervous about meeting them.
The following evening, white Catherine and Fraser were having dinner at the Jockey Club, Fraser told her that he had to go to London for a week. "White Fm gone," he said, "I have an interesting job for you. They've asked our office to supervise an Army Air Corps recruiting film they're shooting at MGM studios hi Hollywood. Fd like you to handle the picture white Fm gone,"
Catherine stared at him incredulously. "Me? I cant even load a Brownie. What do I know about making a training film?"
"About as much as anyone else," Fraser grinned. "It's all pretty new, but you don't have to worry. They'll have a producer and everything. The Army plans to use actors in the film."
«Why?"
"I guess they fed that soldiers won't be convincing enough to play soldiers."
"That sounds like the Army.'*
"I had a long talk with General Mathews this afternoon. He must have used the word 'glamour* a bun*
dred times. That's what they want to sell. They're starting a big recruitment drive aimed at the elite young manhood of America. This is one of the opening guns."
"What do I have to *>?" Catherine asked.
"Just see that everything runs smoothly. YouTl have final approval. You have a reservation to Los Angeles

on a nine and. plane tomorrow."
Catherine nodded. "All right"
"Will you miss me?"
"You know I will," she replied.
"I'll bring you a present."
"I don't want any presents. Just come back safety."
She hesitated. "The situation's getting worse, isn't it, Bill?"
He nodded. "Yes," he said. "I think we're going to be at war soon."
"How horrible."
"It's going to be even more horrible if we dorft get into it," he said quietly. "England got oat of Dunkirk by a miracle. If Hitler decides to cross the Channel now, I don't think the British can stop him." They finished their coffee hi silence, and he paid the check.
"Would you like to come to the house and spend the night?" Fraser asked.
"Not tonight," Catherine said. "You have to get up early, and so do L"
"I'm right"
After he had dropped her off at her apartment and she was getting ready for bed, Catherine asked herself why she had not gone home with Bill on the eve of his departure.
She had no answer.

Catherine had grown up in Hollywood even though she had never been there. She had spent hundreds of hours in darkened theaters, lost hi the magic dreams manufactured by the film capital of the world, and she would always be grateful for the joy of those happy hours.
When Catherine's plane landed at the Burbank airport, she was filled with excitement A limousine was waiting to drive her to her hotel. As they drove down the sunny, broad streets, the first thing Catherine noticed was the palm trees. She had read about them and had seen pictures of them, but the reality was overwhelming. They were everywhere, stretching tall against the sky, the lower part of their graceful trunks bare and the upper part beautiful and verdant. In the center of each tree was a ragged circle of fronds, like a duty petticoat, Catherine thought, hanging unevenly below a green tutu.
They drove by a huge building that looked like a factory. A large sign over the entrance said "Warner Bros." and under it, "Combining Good Pictures with Good Citizenship." As the car went past the gate, Catherine thought of James Cagney in Strawberry Blond, and Bette Davis in Dark Victory and smiled happily.
They passed the Hollywood Bowl, which looked

enormous from the outside, turned off Highland Avenue and went west on Hollywood Boulevard They passed the Egyptian Theater and two blocks to the west, Grauman's Chinese, and Catherine's spirits soared. It was like seeing two old friends. The driver swung down Sunset Boulevard and headed for the Beverly Hills Hotel "You'll enjoy this hotel, miss. Ifs one of the best in the world."

It was certainly one of the most beautiful that Catherine had ever seen. It was just north of Sunset, in a semicircle of sheltering palm trees surrounded by large gardens. A graceful driveway curved up to the front door of the hotel, painted a delicate pink. An eager young assistant manager escorted Catherine to her room, which turned out to be a lavish bungalow on the grounds behind the main building of the hotel. There was a bouquet of flowers on the table with the compliments of the management and a larger, more beautiful bouquet with a card that read: "Wish I were there or you were here. Love, Bill." The assistant manager had handed Catherine three telephone messages. They were all from Allan Benjamin, .whom she had been told was the producer of the training film. As Catherine was reading Bill's card, the phone rang. She ran to it, picked up the receiver and said eagerly, "Bill?" But it turned out to be Allan Benjamin.

''Welcome to California, Miss Alexander," his voice shrilled through the receiver. "Corporal Allan Benjamin, producer of this little clambake."

A corporal. She would have thought that they would have put a captain or a colonel in charge.

"We start shooting tomorrow. Did they tell you that we're using actors instead of soldiers?"

"I heard," Catherine replied.

"We start shooting at nine in the morning. If you could get here by about eight, I'd like to have you take a look at them. You know what the Army Air. Corps wants."

"Right," said Catherine briskly. She had not the faintest idea what the Army Air Corps wanted, but she supposed that if one used common sense and picked out types that looked like they might be pilots, that would be sufficient.

"I'll have a car there for yon at seven thirty and.," the voice was saying. "It'll only take you half an hour to get to Metro. It's in Culver City. FU meet you on Stage Thirteen."

It was almost four o'clock in the morning before Catherine fell asleep, and ft seemed the moment her eyes closed, the phone was ringing and the operator was telling her that a limousine was waiting for her. Thirty minutes later Catherine was on her way to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

It was the largest motion picture studio in the world. There was a main lot consisting of thirty-two sound Stages, the enormous Thalberg Administration Building which housed Louis B. Mayer, twenty-five executives, and some of the most famous directors, producers and writers in show business. Lot two contained the large standing outdoor sets which were constantly redressed for various movies. Within a space of three minutes, you could drive past the Swiss Alps, a western town, a tenement block in Manhattan and a beach in Hawaii. Lot three on the far side of Washington Boulevard housed millions of dollars' worth of props and flat sets and was used to shoot outdoor spectacles.

All this was explained to Catherine by her guide, a young girl who was assigned to take her to Stage 13.

"It's a city in itself," she was saying proudly. "We produce our own electricity, make enough food in the commissary to feed six thousand people a day and build all our own sets right on the back lot We're completely self-sufficient. We don't need anybody."

"Except an audience."

As they walked along the street, they passed a castle that consisted of a facade with two by fours propping it up. Across from it was a lake, and down the block was the lobby of a San Francisco theater. No theater, just the lobby.

Catherine laughed aloud, and the girl stared at her.

"Is there anything wrong?" she asked.

"No," Catherine said. "Everything is wonderful"

Dozens of extras walked along the street, cowboys and Indians chatting amiably together as they walked toward the sound stages. A man appeared unexpectedly from around a corner and as Catherine stepped back to avoid him, she saw that he was a knight in armor. Behind him walked a group of girls in bathing suits. Catherine decided that she was going to like her brief fling in show business. She wished her father could have seen this. He would have enjoyed it so much.

"Here we are," the guide said. They were hi front of a huge, gray building. A sign on the side of it said «STAGE 13."

Til leave you here. Will you be all right?"

'Tine," Catherine said. "Thank you."

The guide nodded and left Catherine turned back to the sound stage. A sign over the door read: "DO NOT ENTER WHEN RED LIGHT IS ON." The light was off, so Catherine pulled the handle of the door and opened it Or tried to. The door was unexpectedly heavy, and it took all her strength to get it open.

When she stepped inside, Catherine found herself confronted by a second door as heavy and massive as the first It was like entering a decompression chamber.

Inside the cavernous sound stage, dozens of people were racing around, each one busy on some mysterious errand. A group of men were in Air Corps uniforms, and Catherine realized that they were the actors who would appear in the film. At a far corner of the sound stage was an office set complete with desk, chairs and a large military map hanging on the walL Technicians were lighting the set

"Excuse me," she said to a man passing by. "Is Mister Allan Benjamin here?"

"The little corporal?" He pointed. "Over mere."

Catherine turned and saw a slight, frail-looking man in an ill-fitting uniform with corporal's stripes. He was screaming at a man wearing a general's stars.

"Fuck what the casting director said," lie yelled. "Fm up to my ass in generals. I need non-coms." He raised his hands in despair. "Everybody wants to be a chief, nobody wants to be an Indian."

"Excuse me," said Catherine, "I'm Catherine Alexander."

"Thank God!" the little man said. He turned to the others, bitterness in his voice. "The fun and games are over, you smart-asses. Washington's here.''

Catherine blinked. Before she could speak, the little corporal said, "I don't know what I'm doing here. I had a thirty-five-hundred-dollar-a-year job in Dearborn editing a furniture trade magazine, and I was drafted into the Signal Corps and sent to write training films. What do I know about producing or directing? This is the most disorganized mess he ever seen." He belched and touched his stomach. "I'm getting an ulcer," he moaned, "and I'm not even in show business. Excuse me."

He turned and hurried toward the exit, leaving Catherine standing there. She looked around, helplessly. Everyone seemed to be staring at her, waiting for her to do something.

A lean, gray-haired man in a sweater moved toward her, an amused smile om his face. "Need any help?" he asked quietly.

"I need a miracle," Catherine said frankly. "I'm in charge of this, and I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing."

He grinned at her. "Welcome to Hollywood. Fm Tom O'Brien, the A.D."

She looked at him, quizzically.

"The assistant director. Your friend, the corporal, was supposed to direct it, but I have a feeling he wont be back." There was a calm assurance about the man which Catherine liked.

"How long have you worked at Metro-GoMwyo-Mayer?" she asked^

"Twenty-five years."

"Do you think you could direct this?"
She saw the comer of his lips twist. "I could try," he said gravely. "IVe done six pictures with Willie Wyler." His eyes grew serious. "The situation isn't as bad as it looks," he said. "All it needs is a little organization. The script's written, and the set's ready."
"That's a beginning," Catherine said. She looked around the sound stage at the uniforms. Most of them were badly fitted, and the men wearing them looked ill at ease.
"They look like recruiting ads for the Navy," Catherine coinmented.
O'Brien laughed appreciatively.
"Where did these uniforms come from?"
"Western Costume. Our Wardrobe Department ran out. We're shooting three war pictures."
Catherine studied the men critically. "There are only half a dozen that are really bad," she decided. "Let's send them back and see if we can't do better."
O'Brien nodded approvingly. "Right"
Catherine and O'Brien walked over to the group of extras. The din of conversation on the enormous stage was deafening.
"Let's hold it down, boys," O'Brien yelled. "This is Miss Alexander. She's going to be hi charge here."
There were a few appreciative whistles and cat calls.
"Thanks," Catherine smiled. "Most of yon look fine, but a few of you are going to have to go back to Western Costume and get different uniforms. Let's line up, so we can take a good look at you."
"I'd like to take a good look at you. What are yon doing for dinner tonight?" one of the men called.
"I'm having it with my husband," Catherine said, "right after his match."
O'Brien formed the men into a ragged line. Catherine heard laughter and voices nearby and turned In annoyance.
One of the extras was standing next to a piece of scenery, talking to three girls who were hanging on his every word and giggling hysterically at everything he said. Catherine watched a moment, then walked over to the man and said, "Excuse me. Would yon mind joining the rest of us?"
The man turned slowly. "Are you talking to me?" he asked lazily.
"Yes," Catherine said. "We'd like to go to work."
She walked away.
He whispered something to the girls which drew a loud laugh, then slowly moved after Catherine. He was a tall man, his body lean and hard-looking, and he was very handsome, with blue-black hair and stormy dark eyes. His voice, when he spoke, was deep and filled with insolent amusement "What can I do for you?" he asked Catherine.

"Do you want to work?" Catherine replied.
"I do, I do," he assured her.
Catherine had once read an article about extras.
They were a strange breed of people, spending their anonymous lives on sound stages, lending background atmosphere to crowd scenes in which stars appeared.
They were faceless, voiceless people, inherently too ambitionless to seek any kind of meaningful employment.
The man in front of her was a perfect example.
Because he was outrageously handsome, someone from his hometown had probably told him that he could be a star, and he had come to Hollywood, learned that tat a was necessary as wefl as good looks and had settled
for being an extra. The easy way out.
"We're going to have to change some of the uniforms," Catherine said patiently.
"Is there anything wrong with mine?" he asked.
Catherine took a closer look at his uniform. She had to admit that it fitted perfectly, emphasizing his broad shoulders but not exaggerating them, tapering in at his lean waist. She looked at his tunic. On his shoulders were the bars of a captain. Across his breast he had pinned on a splash of brightly colored ribbons.
"Are they impressive enough, Boss?" he asked.
"Who told you you were going to play a captain?"
He looked at her, seriously, "It was my idea. don't you think I'd make a good captain?"
Catherine shook her head. "No. I don't"
He pursed his lips thoughtfully. "First lieutenant?"
Wo."
"How about second lieutenant?"
"I don't really feel you're officer material.**
His dark eyes were regarding her quizzically. "Oh? Anything else wrong?" he asked.
"Yes," she said "The medals. You must be terribly brave."
He laughed. "I thought I'd give this damned film a little color."
"There's only one thing you forgot," Catherine said crisply. "We're not at war yet You'd have had to win those at a carnival."
The man grinned at bet "You're right," he admitted sheepishly. "I didn't think of that I'll take some of them off.1'
'Take them an off," Catherine said.
He gave her that slow, insolent grin again. "Right, Boss."
She almost snapped, "Stop calling me boss," but thought, the hell with him, and turned on her bed to talk to O'Brien.
Catherine sent eight of the men back to change their uniforms and spent the next hour discussing the scene with O'Brien. The little corporal had come back briefly

and then had disappeared. It was just as well, Catherine thought. AH he did was complain and make everyone nervous. O'Brien finished shooting the fast scene before lunch, and Catherine felt it had not gone too badly.. Only one incident had marred her morning. Catherine had given the infuriating extra several lines to read in order to humiliate him. She had wanted to show him up on the set to pay him back for his impertinence. He had read his lines perfectly, carrying off the scene with aplomb. When he had finished, he had turned to her and said, "Was that all right, Boss?"
.When the company broke for lunch, Catherine walked over to the enormous studio commissary and sat at a small table in the corner. At a large table next to her was a group of soldiers in uniform. Catherine was facing the door, when she saw the extra walk in, the three girls hanging on him, each one pushing to get closer to him. Catherine felt the blood rush to her face. She decided it was merely a chemical reaction. There were some people you hated on sight, just as there were others you liked on sight Something about his overbearing arrogance rubbed her the wrong way. He would >have made a perfect gigolo and that was probably exactly what he was.
He seated the girls at a table, looked up and saw Catherine, then leaned over and said something to the girls. They all looked at her and then there was a burst of laughter. Damn hunt She watched as he moved toward her table. He stared down at her, that slow, knowing smile on his face. "Mind if I join you a moment?" he asked.
"I--" but he was already seated, studying her» his eyes probing and amused.
"What is it you want?" Catherine asked stiffly.
His grin widened. "Do you really want to know?"
Her lips tightened with anger. "Listen--"
"I wanted to ask you," he said quickly, "how I did this morning." He leaned forward earnestly. "Was I convincing?"
"You may be convincing to them," Catherine said, nodding toward the girls, "but if you want my opinion, I think you're a phony."
"Have I done something to offend you?"
"Everything you do offends me," she said evenly. "I don't happen to like your type."
"What is my type?"
"You're a fake. You enjoy wearing that uniform and strutting around the girls, but have you thought about enlisting?"
He stared at her incredulously. "And get shot at?" he asked. "That's for suckers." He leaned forward and grinned. "This is a lot more fun."
Catherine's lips were quivering with anger. "Aren't

you eligible for the draft?"
"I suppose technically I'm eligible, but a friend of mine knows a guy in Washington and"--he lowered his voice--"I don't think they'll ever get me."
"I think you're contemptible," Catherine exploded.
"Why?"
"If you don't know why, I could never explain it to you."
"Why don't you try? At dinner tonight Your place. Do you cook?"
Catherine rose to her feet, her cheeks flushed with anger. "Don't bother coming back to the set," she .said. "I'll tell Mr. O'Brien to send you your check for this morning's work."
She turned to go, then remembered and asked, "What's your name?"
"Douglas," he said. "Larry Douglas."

traser telephoned Catherine from London the next night to find out how things had gone. She reported to hhii the day's happenings but made no mention of the incident with Larry Douglas. When Fraser returned to Washington, she would tell him about it, and they

would laugh over it together.
Early the next morning as Catherine was dressed to go to the studio, the doorbell rang. She opened the bungalow door and a delivery boy stood there holding a large bouquet of roses.
"Catherine Alexander?" he asked.
"Yes."
"Sign here please."
She signed the form that he handed her. They're lovely," she said, taking the flowers.
That'll be fifteen dollars."
"I beg your pardon?"
"Fifteen dollars. They're C.O.D."
"I don't under--" her lips tightened. Catherine reached for the card attached to the flowers and pulled it out of the envelope. The card read: "I would have paid for these myself, but I'm not working. Love, Larry."
She stared at the card unbelievingly.
"Well, do you want 'em or not?" asked the delivery boy.
"Not," she snapped. She thrust the flowers back in his arms.
He looked at her, puzzled. "He said you'd laugh. That it was kind of a private joke."
"I'm not laughing," Catherine said. She slammed the door furiously.
All that day, the incident kept rankling her. She had met egotistical men but never anyone with the outrageous

conceit of Mr. Larry Douglas. She was sure that
he had had an endless succession of victories with
empty-headed blondes and bosomy brunettes who
couldn't wait to fling themselves into his bed. But for
him to put her in that category made Catherine feel
cheap and humiliated. The mere thought of him made
her flesh crawl. She determined to put him out of her
mind
At seven o'clock that evening Catherine started to
leave the stage. An assistant came up to her, an envelope
in his hand.
"Did you charge this, Miss Alexander?" he asked.
It was a charge slip from central casting and it read:

One uniform (captain)
Six service ribbons (assorted)
Six medals (assorted)
Actor's Name: Lawrence Douglas . .
Charge to Catherine Alexander--MGM).

. (Personal

Catherine looked up, her face flushed.
"No!" she said.
He stared. "What shall I tell them?"
"Tell them I'll pay for his medals if they're awarded
posthumously."
The picture finished shooting three days later.
Catherine looked at the rough-cut the following day
and approved it. The film would not win any awards,
but it was simple and effective. Tom O'Brien had done
a good job.
On Saturday morning Catherine boarded a plane for
Washington. She had never been so glad to leave a
city. Monday morning she was back in her office trying
to catch up on the work that had piled up during her
absence.
Just before lunch, her secretary, Annie, buzzed her.
"A Mr. Larry Douglas is on the phone from Hollywood,
California, collect. Do you want to take the call?
"No," she snapped. "Tell him that I--never mind,
I'll tell him myself." She took a deep breath and
pressed the phone button. "Mr. Douglas?"
"Good morning." His voice had the consistency of
hot fudge. "I had a hard time tracking you down.
Don't you like roses?"
"Mr. Douglas--" Catherine began. Her voice quavered
with fury. She took a deep breath and said, "Mr.
Douglas, I love roses. I don't like you. I don't like anything
about you. Is that clear?"
"You don't know anything about me,"

"I know more than I want to know. I think you're cowardly and despicable, and I don't want you ever to can me again." Trembling, she slammed down the receiver, her eyes filled with tears of anger. How dare he! She would be so glad when Bill returned.

Three days later Catherine received a ten by twelve photograph of Lawrence Douglas in the mail. It was inscribed, To the boss, with love from Larry."

Annie stared at it in awe, and said, "My Oodt Is he real?"

"Fake," retorted Catherine. "The only real thing is the paper it's printed on." She savagely tore the picture to shreds.

Annie watched, dismayed. "What a waste. I've never seen one like mat in the flesh."

"In Hollywood," Catherine said grimly, "they have sets that are all front--no foundation. You've just seen one."

During the next two weeks, Larry Douglas phoned at least a dozen times. Catherine instructed Annie to tell him not to call again and not to bother telling her about his calls. One morning while Annie was taking dictation, she looked up and said apologetically, "I know you told me not to bother you with Mr. Douglas* calls, but he called again, and he sounded so desperate and well. . . kind of lost."

"He is tost," Catherine said coldly, "and if you're smart, you wont try to find him."

"He sure sounds charming."

"He invented treacle."

"He asked a lot of questions about you." She saw Catherine's look. "But, of course," she added hastily, "I didn't tell him anything."

"That was very bright of you, Annie."

Catherine began to dictate again, but her mind was not on it She supposed the world was full of Larry Douglases. It made her appreciate William Eraser all the more.

Hugh Fraser returned the following Sunday morning, and Catherine went to the airport to meet him. She watched as he finished with Customs and came toward the exit where she was standing. His face fit up when he saw her.

"Cathy," he said. "What a surprise. I didn't expect you to meet me."

"I couldn't wait," she smiled and gave him a warm hug that made him look at her quizzically.

"You've missed me," he said.

"More than you know."

"How was Hollywood?" he asked. "Did it go well?"

She hesitated. "Fine. They're very pleased with the picture."
"So I hear."
"Bill, next time you go away," she said, "take me with you.'*
He looked at her, pleased and touched.
"It's a deal," Fraser said. "I missed you. I've been doing a lot of thinking about you."
"Have you?"
"Do you love me?"
"Very much, Mr. Fraser."
"I love you, too," he said. "Why don't we go out tonight and celebrate?"
She smiled. "Wonderful."
"Well have dinner at the Jefferson Crab."
She dropped Fraser at his house.
"I have a few thousand calls to make," he said. "Could you meet me at the club? Eight o'clock."
"Fine," she said.
Catherine went back to her apartment and did some washing and ironing. Each time she passed the telephone, she half-expected it to ring, but it remained silent. She thought of Larry Douglas trying to pump Annie for information about her and found that she was gritting her teeth. Maybe she would speak to Fraser about turning Douglas* name in to his draft board. No, I won't bother, she thought They'd prob* ably turn Mm down. He'd be tried and found wanton. She washed her hair, took a long luxurious bath and was drying herself when the phone rang. She went over to it and picked it up. "Yes?" she said coldly.
It was Fraser. "Hi," he said. "Anything wrongT
"Of course not, Bill," she said quickly. "I--I was just to the bath."
"I'm sorry." His voice took on a teasing tone. 1 mean I'm sorry I'm not there with you."
"So am I," she replied.
"I called to tell you I miss you. don't belate."
Catherine smiled. "I won't."
She hung up, slowly, thinking about Bill. For the first time she felt that he was ready to propose. He was going to ask her to become Mrs. William Fraser. She said the name aloud. "Mrs. William Fraser." It had a nice dignified sound to it. My God, she thought I'm becoming blase. Six months ago, I would have been jumping out of my skin, and now all I can say is it has a nice dignified sound to it. Had she really changed that much? It was not a comforting thought She looked at the clock and hurriedly began to dress.

The Jefferson Club was on "F" Street, a discreet brick building set back from the street and surrounded by a wrought-iron fence. It was one of the most exclusive

clubs in a city foil of exclusive clubs. The easiest way to become a member was to have a father who belonged. If one lacked that foresight, then it was necessary to be recommended by three members. Membership proposals were brought up once a year and one black ball was sufficient to keep a person out of the Jefferson Club for the rest of his life, since it was a firm rule that no candidate could ever be proposed twice.

William Fraser's father had been a founding member of the club, and Fraser and Catherine had dinner there at least once a week. The chef had been with the French branch of the Rothschilds for twenty years, the cuisine was superb, and the wine cellar ranked as the third best in America. him club had been decorated by one of the world's leading decorators and careful attention had been paid to the colors and the lighting, so the women were bathed in candlelight glow that enhanced their beauty. On any given night, diners would brush elbows with the Vice-President, members of the Cabinet or Supreme Court, senators and the powerful industrialists who controlled worldwide empires.

Eraser was in the foyer waiting for Catherine when she arrived.

"Am I late?" she asked.

"It wouldn't matter if you were," Fraser said, looking at her with open admiration. "Do you know you're fantastically beautiful?"

"Of course," she replied. "Everybody knows I'm the fantastically beautiful Catherine Alexander."

"I mean it, Cathy." IBs tone was so serious that she was embarrassed.

"Thank you, Bill," she said awkwardly. "And stop staring at me like that."

"I can't help it," he said. He took her arm.

Louis, the maitre d', led them to a comer booth.

There you are, Miss Alexander, Mr. Fraser, enjoy yourdinner."

Catherine liked being known by name by the maitre d' of the Jefferson Club. She knew that it was childish and naive of her, but it gave her a feeling of being somebody, of belonging. Now she sat back, relaxed and contented, surveying the room.

"Will you have a drink?" Fraser asked.

"No, thank you," Catherine said.

He shook his head. "he got to teach yon some bad habits."

"You already have," Catherine murmured.

He grinned at her and ordered a scotch and soda.

She studied him, thinking what a dear, sweet man he was. She was sure that she could make him very happy. And she would be happy married to him. Very happy, she told herself

fiercely. Ask anybody. Ask Time magazine.
She hated herself for the way her mind was
working. What hi God's name was wrong with her?
"Bill/* she began--and froze.
Larry Douglas was walking toward them, a smile of
recognition on his lips as he saw Catherine. He was
wearing his Army Air Corps uniform from Central
Casting. She watched unbelievingly as he came over to
their table, grinning happily. "Hello there," he said.
But he was not speaking to Catherine. He was speaking
to Bill, who was getting up and shaking his hand.
"If him great to see you, Larry."
"It's good to see you, Bill."
Catherine stared at the two of them, her mind paralyzed,
refusing to function.
Fraser was saying, "Cathy, this is Captain Lawrence
Douglas. Larry, this is Miss Alexander---Catherine."
Larry Douglas was looking down at her, his dark
eyes mocking her. "I can't tell you what a pleasure this
is, Miss Alexander," he said solemnly.
Catherine opened her mouth to speak, but she suddenly
realized there was nothing that she could say.
Fraser was watching her, waiting for her to speak. All
she could manage was a nod. She did not trust her
voice.
"Will you join us, Larry?" Fraser asked.
Larry looked at Catherine and said modestly, "If
you're sure I'm not intruding--*
"Certainly not Sit down."
Larry took a seat next to Catherine.
"What would you tike to drink?" Fraser asked.
"Scotch and soda," Larry replied.
"Ill have the same," Catherine said recklessly.
"Make it a double."
Fraser looked at her in surprise. "I can't believe it."
"You said you wanted to teach me some bad
habits," Catherine said. "I think I'd like to start now."
When Fraser had ordered the drinks, he turned to
and said, "I've been hearing about some of your
doits born General Terry--both in the air and on
Aground."
Catherine was staring at Larry, her mind spinning,
I'Hying to adjust. "Those medals. . ."she said. 1 He was looking at her
innocently. a. "Yesr
She swallowed. "Er--where did yon get them?" , "I won them in a carnival," he
said .gravely.
"Some carnival,"' Fraser laughed. "Larry's been
flying with the RAF. He was the leader of the American
Squadron over there. They talked him into heading
up a fighter base in Washington to get some of our
boys ready for combat"
. Catherine turned to stare at Larry. He was smiling
at her benevolently, his eyes dancing. Like the rerun of

an old movie, Catherine remembered every word of
their first meeting. She had ordered him to take off his captain's bars and his medals, and he had cheerfully obliged. She had been smug, overbearing--and she had called him a coward! She wanted to crawl under the table.
"I wish you had let me know you were coming into town," Fraser was saying. "I would have trotted out a fatted calf for you. We should have bad a big party to celebrate your return."
"I like this better," Larry said. He looked over at Catherine, and she turned away, unable to meet his eyes. "As a matter of fact," Larry continued innocently, "I looked for you when I was in Hollywood, Bill. I heard you were producing an Air Corps training film."
He stopped to light a cigarette and carefully blew out the match. "I went over to the set, but you weren't there."
"I had to fly to London,*' Fraser replied, "Catherine was there. I'm surprised you didn't run into each other,"
Catherine looked up at Larry, and he was watching her, his eyes amused. Now was the time to mention what had happened. She would tell Fraser, and they would all laugh it off as an amusing anecdote. But somehow the words stuck in her throat
Larry gave her a moment, then said, "It was a pretty crowded set I guess we missed each other."
She hated him for helping her out, for making them fellow conspirators against Fraser.
When the drinks arrived, Catherine downed hers quickly and asked for another. This was going to be the most terrible evening of her life. She could not wait to get out of there, to get away from Larry Douglas.
Fraser asked him about his war experiences, and Larry made them sound easy and amusing. He obviously didn't take anything seriously. He was a lightweight
And yet all fairness, Catherine reluctantly admitted to herself that a lightweight did not volunteer for the RAF ana become a hero fighting against the Luftwaffe. Irrationally, she hated him even more because he was a hero. Her attitude didn't make sense to her, and she brooded about it over her third double scotch. What difference did it make whether he was a hero or a bum? And then she realized that as long as he was a bum, he fitted neatly into a pigeonhole mat she could deal with. Through the haze of the liquor she sat back and listened to the two men talk. There was an eager enthusiasm about Larry when he spoke, a vitality that was so palpable it reached across and touched her. He seemed to her now like the most alive man she had ever met Catherine had a feeling that he held nothing back from life, mat he gave himself to everything

wholeheartedly and that he mocked those who
were afraid to give. Who were afraid, period. Like herself.
She hardly touched her food, she had no idea what
she was eating. She met Larry's eyes, and it was as
though he were already her lover, as if they had already
been together, belonged together, and she knew
insane. He was like a cyclone, a force of nature,
woman who got sucked up in the vortex was
jto be destroyed.
'Larry was smiling at her. "I'm afraid we've been ex-Miss
Alexander from the conversation," he
litely. "I'm sure she's more interesting than the him of us put together.
"You're wrong," Catherine said thickly. "I Eve a
dull life.. I work with Bill." The moment she said I she heard how it sounded
and turned red. "I didn't
him it like that," she said. "I meant--"
' "I know what you meant," Larry said. And she hat-I
him. He turned to Bill. "Where did you find her?"
"I got lucky," Fraser said warmly. "Very lucky.
i'lTou're still not married?"
Larry shrugged. "Who'd have me?" You bastard, Catherine thought. She looked
around
me room. Half a dozen women were staring at Larry,
some covertly, some openly. He was like a sexual magnet.
"How were the English girls?" Catherine said
recklessly.
"They were fine," he said, politely. *XM Course, I didn't have much time for
that sort of thing. I was busy
flying."
Like hen you didn't, Catherine thought I'll bet there
wasn't a virgin left standing within a hundred miles of
you. Aloud, she said, "I feel sorry for those poor girls.
Look at all they missed." Her tone was more biting
than she had intended.
Fraser was looking at her, puzzled by her rudeness.
"Cathy," he said.
"Let's have another drink," Larry cut in quickly.
"I think perhaps Catherine's had enough," Fraser
replied.
"Thash not so," Catherine began, and to her horror
she realized she was slurring her words. "I think I want
to go home," she said.
"All right"--Fraser tamed to Larry*-"Catherine
doesn't drink as a rate," he said apologetically.
"I imagine she's excited about seeing you again,"
Larry said.
Catherine wanted to pick up a glass of water and
throw it at him. She had hated him less when he was a
bum. Now she hated him more. And she did not know
why.
The next morning Catherine woke up with a hangover
that she was convinced would make medical history.
She had at least three heads on her shoulders, all

of them pounding to the beat of different drummers.
Lying still in bed was agony but trying to move was worse. As she lay 'there fighting nausea, the whole evening flooded back in her memory, and the pain increased. Unreasonably she blamed Larry Douglas for her hangover, for if it had not been for him, she would not have had anything to drink. Painfully Catherine turned her head and looked at the clock beside her bed. She had overslept. She debated whether to stay in bed or call a pulmotor squad. Carefully she pulled herself out of her deathbed and dragged herself into the bathroom. She stumbled into the shower, turned the water on cold and let the icy jets stream against her body. She screamed out loud as the water hit her, but when she came out of the shower, she was feeling better. Not good, she thought carefully. Just better.
Forty-five minutes later she was at her desk. Her secretary, Annie, came in full of excitement. "Guess what," she said.
"Not this morning," Catherine whispered. "Just be a good girl and speak softly."
"Lookl" Annie thrust the morning paper at her. "It's him."
On the front page was a picture of Larry Douglas in uniform, grinning at her insolently. The caption read: "AMERICAN RAF HERO RETURNS TO WASHINGTON TO HEAD UP NEW FIGHTER UNIT." A two-column story followed.
isn't that exciting?1' Annie cried.
"Terribly," Catherine said. She slammed the paper the wastebasket. "Can we get on with our work?"
Annie looked at her, surprised. "I'm sorry," she id. "I--I thought since he was a friend of yours, I'd be interested."
"He's not a friend," Catherine corrected her. "He's of an enemy." She saw the look on Annie's face, we just forget about Mr. Douglas?"
"Certainly," Annie said in a puzzled voice. "I told I thought you'd be pleased."
Catherine stared at her. "When?"
"When he called this morning. He's called three ?ftimes."
Catherine steeled herself to make her voice casual. fWhy didn't you tell me?"
1 "You asked me not to tell you when he called." She was watching Catherine, her face filled with confusion.
"Did he leave a number?"
"No."
"Good." Catherine thought of his face, of those large, dark teasing eyes. "Good»" she said again, more firmly. She finished dictating some letters and when Annie had left the room, Catherine went over to the wastebasket and retrieved the newspaper. She read the 'story about Larry word for word. He was an ace with eight German planes to his credit. He had been shot

down twice over the Channel. She buzzed Annie. "If
Mr. Douglas calls again, 111 talk to him."
There was only a fractional pause. "Yes, Miss
Alexander."
After all, there was no point in being rude to the
man. Catherine would simply apologize for her behavior
at the studio and ask him to stop calling her. She
was going to marry William Fraser.
She waited for another call from him all afternoon.
He had not called by six o'clock. Why should he? Catherine asked herself.
He's out laying six other girls.
You're lucky. Being involved with him would be like
going to a butcher shop. You take your number and
wait your turn.
On the way out she said to Annie, "If Mr. Douglas
calls tomorrow, tell him I'm not in."
Annie did not even blink. "Yes, Miss Alexander.
Good night."
"Goodnight."
Catherine rode down in the elevator, lost in thought
She was sure that Bill Fraser wanted to marry her. The
best thing to do would be to tell him that she wanted to
get married right away. She would tell him tonight
They would go away for a honeymoon. By the time
they got back, Larry Douglas would have left town. Or
something.
The elevator door opened at the lobby, and Larry
Douglas was standing there, leaning against the wall
He had taken off his medals and ribbons and was wearing
the bars of a second lieutenant He smiled and
walked up to her.
"Is this better?" he asked brightly.
Catherine stared at him, her heart pounding.
"Isn't--isn't wearing the wrong insignia against regulations?"
"I don't know," he said earnestly. "I thought you
were in charge of all that."
He stood there looking down at her, and she said in
a small voice, "Don't do this to me. I want you to leave
me alone. I belong to Bill."
"Where's your wedding ring?"
Catherine brushed past him and started toward the
street door. When she reached it, he was mere ahead
of her, holding it open for her.
Outside he took her arm. She felt a shock go
through her whole body. There was an electricity that
came from him that burned her. "Cathy--" he began.
"For God's sake," she said desperately. "What do
you want from me?"
"Everything," he said quietly. "I want you."

'ell, you can't have me," she wailed. "Go torture

else." She turned to walk away, and he
ed her back.
«What is that supposed to mean?" Ill don't know," Catherine said, her eyes
fifflng with
I don't know what I'm saying. I--I have a
. I want to die."
He grinned sympathetically. "I have a marvelous
for hangovers." He guided her into the garage of
building.
"Where are we going?" she asked in a panic.
"We're getting my car."
Catherine looked up at him, searching his face for a
of triumph, but all she saw was his strong, incrédi-handsome
face filled with warmth and compassion.
The attendant brought up a tan sports convertible
with the top 'down. Larry helped Catherine into the car
and slid hi behind the wheel. She sat there looking
straight ahead, knowing that she was throwing her
Whole life away and totally unable to stop herself. It
was as though all this were happening to someone else.
She wanted to tell the silly, lost girl in the car to flee.
"Your place or mine?" Larry asked gently.
She shook her head. "It doesn't matter," she said
hopelessly.
-"Well go to my place.**
So he was not totally insensitive. Or else he was
afraid to compete with the shadow of William Fraser.
She watched him as he deftly tooled the car through
the early evening traffic. No, he was not afraid of anything.
That was part of his goddamn attraction.
She tried to tell herself that she was free to say no to
him, free to walk away. How could she love William
Fraser and feel this way about Larry?
*'M it helps any," Larry said quietly, *Tm as nervous
as you are."
Catherine looked over at him. "Thanks," she said.
He was lying, of course. He probably said that to all
his victims as he took them up to his bed to seduce
them. But at least he wasn't gloating about it. What
bothered her most was that she was betraying Bill
Fraser. He was too dear a man to hurt, and this was
going to hurt him very much. Catherine knew that and
knew that what she was doing was wrong and senseless,
but it was as though she had no will of her own
anymore.
They had reached a pleasant residential area with
large, shady trees lining the street Larry pulled the car
up hi front of an apartment building. "We're home," he
said quietly.
Catherine knew that this was her final chance to say
no, to tell him to keep away from her. She watched
silently as Larry came around and opened the door.
She got out of the car and walked into his apartment

building.
Larry's apartment had been decorated for a man. It
had strong solid colors, and masculine-looking furniture.
As they walked in, Larry took off Catherine's coat
and she shivered
"Are you cold?" he asked.
"No."
"Would you like a drink?"
"No."
Gently he took her in his arms, and they kissed. It
was as though her body were being set aflame. Without
a word Larry led her into the bedroom. There was a
growing urgency as they both silently undressed. She
lay on the bed naked, and he moved beside her.
"Larry--" but his lips were on hers, and his hands
began to move down her body, gently exploring, and
she forgot everything except the pleasure that was happening
to iier, and her hands began to grope for him.
And she felt him hot and hard and pulsating and his
fingers were inside her, opening her up gently and lovingly
and he was on top of her and in her, and there
was an exquisite joy that she had never dreamed pos- and then they were
together, moving faster and to in a fantastic rhythm that rocked the room and
him world and the universe until there was an explosion
: became a delirious ecstasy an unbelievable shatter*
; journey an arriving and departure an ending and a
inning and Catherine lay there spent and numb
aiding him tightly never wanting to let him go never
ing this feeling to stop. Nothing she had ever read
heard could have prepared her for this. It was unbe-able
that another person's body could bring such him. She lay there at peace: a
woman. And she knew
''that if she never saw bun again, she would be grateful
? to him for the rest of her life.
"Cathy?"
She turned to look at him, slowly and lazily. "Yes?1*
Even her voice seemed deeper to her, more mature. 1 "Could you get your nails
out of my back?"
She suddenly realized that she had been digging into
his flesh. "Oh, Tm sorry!" she exclaimed. She started
to examine his back, but he caught her hands and
pulled her close to him.
"It doesnt matter. Are you happy?"
"Happy?" Her lip trembled and to her horror she
began to cry. Great sobs that wrenched her body. He
held her in his arms, stroking her soothingly, letting the
storm spend itself.
"I'm sorry," she said. "I don't know what made me % do that."
"Disappointment?"
Catherine looked at him quickly to protest, then saw
that he was teasing her. He took her into his arms and
made love to her again. It was even more incredible
than before. Afterward they lay in bed and he talked,

but she didn't listen. All she wanted to hear was the sound of his voice, and it didn't matter to her what he said. She knew there would never be anyone for her but this man. And she knew that this man could never belong to any one woman and that she would probably

,'/

never see him again, that she was just another conquest to him. She was aware that his voice had stopped and that he was watching her.

"You haven't heard a word I said."

"Sorry," she said. "I was daydreaming."

"I should be hurt," he said reproachfully. "You're only interested in me for my body."

She ran her hands over his lean tanned chest and stomach. "I'm no expert," she said, "but I think this one will do nicely." She smiled. "It did nicely." She wanted to ask him whether he had enjoyed her, but she was afraid to.

"You're beautiful, Cathy."

She thrilled to his saving it and at the same time resented it. Anything he said to her he had said a thousand times to other women. She wondered how he was going to say good-bye. Call me sometime? Or, /'// call you sometime? Perhaps he would even want to see her again once or twice before he went on to someone else. Well, she had no one to blame but herself. She had known what she was getting into. / walked into this with my eyes and my legs wide open. No matter what happens, I must never blame him.

He slid his arms around her and held her close.

"Do yon know you're a very special girl, Cathy?"

Do you know you're a very special girl--Alice, Susan, Margaret, Peggy, Lana.

"I felt it from the first time I saw you. I've never felt this way about anyone before."

--Janet, Evelyn, Ruth, Georgia, ad infinitum. She buried her head in his chest, not trusting herself to speak, and held him tightly, silently saying goodbye.

"I'm hungry," Larry said. "Do you know what I feel like?"

Catherine smiled. "Yes, I certainly do."

Larry grinned down at her. "You know something?" he asked. "You're a sex maniac."

She looked up. "Thank you."

He led her into the shower and turned it on. He took

fiower cap from a hook on the wall and put it on tierine's head, tuckfhg in her hair. "Come on," he and pulled her into the piercing jet water. He OK a bar of soap and began to wash her body, start-with her neck and working down to her arms and vly circling her breasts and moving down to her Dtnach and her thighs. She began to feel an excite in her groin and she took the soap from him and to wash Mm, lathering his chest and stomach moving down between his legs. His organ began to grow hard in her hand.
,, He spread her legs and put his male hardness inside Imc and Catherine was transported again, drowning in
11 torrent of water that beat against her body, while in side she was filled with the same unbearable joy, until
I The screamed aloud in sheer happiness.
' Afterward they dressed, got into his car and drove to Maryland, where they found a little restaurant that was Still open and they had lobster and champagne.
' At fiVe o'clock in the morning, Catherine dialed William Eraser's number at home'and stood there listening to the long rings eighty miles away until finally Eraser's sleepy voice came on the phone, and said,
"Hello. . .w "Hello, Bffl. It's Catherine."
"Catherine! I've been trying to call you all evening. Where are you? Are you all right?"
"I'm fine. I'm in Maryland with Larry Douglas. Wo just got married."

Noelle

Paris: 1941

8

Christian Barbet was an unhappy man. The bald little detective sat at his desk, a cigarette between this stained, broken teeth, and gloomily contemplated the folder in front of him. The information it contained

was going to cost him a client. He had been charging Noelle Page outrageous fees, for his services, but it was not only the loss of the income that saddened him: He would miss the client herself. He hated Noelle Page and yet she was the most exciting woman he had ever met, Barbet built lurid fantasies around Noelle in which she always ended up in his power. Now the assignment was about to come to an end, and he would never see her again. He had kept her waiting in the reception office while he tried to figure out a way to handle things so that he could squeeze some additional money out of her to prolong the case. But be reluctantly concluded that there was no way. Barbet sighed, snuffed out his cigarette, walked over to the door and opened it. Noelle was sitting on the black mutation leather couch, and as he studied her, his heart caught in his throat for a moment It was unfair for any woman to be so beautiful. "Good afternoon, Mademoiselle," he said. "Come in."

She entered his office moving with the grace of a model. It was good for Barbet to have a name client like Noelle Page, and he was not above dropping her name frequently. It attracted other clients, and Christian Barbet was not a man to lose any sleep over ethics.

"Please sit down," he said, indicating a chair. "Can

(get you a brandy, aa aperitif?"

Part of Ms fantasy was getting Noelle drank so that him would beg him to seduce her.

l'J< "No," she replied. "I came for your report"

L The bitch could have had a last drink with him! S|i?Yes," Barbel said. "As a matter of fact I haw several pieces of news." He reached over to the desk and pre tended to study the dossier, which he had already memorized. «

"First," he informed her, "your friend was promoted I to Captain and transferred to the one hundred thirty third squadron, where he was put in command. The field is at ColtisaU, Duxtford, in Cambridgeshire. They flew"--he spoke slowly and deliberately, knowing that she was not interested in the technical part^"Hurri-canes and Spitfire IPs and then switched to Mark Vs. They then flewT--" <

"Never mind," Noelle interrupted impatiently.

"Where is he now?"

Barbel had been waiting for the question./'In the United States." He saw the reaction before she could control it, and he {took savage satisfaction in it "In Washington, D.C," he continued.

"On leave?"

Barbel shook his head. "No. He's been discharged

from the RAF. He's a Captain in the United State*
Army Air Corps." ,
He watched Noelle digesting the information, her
expression giving no clue to what she was feeling. But
Barbel was not finished with her yet. He picked up a
newspaper clipping between his stained sausage fingers
and handed it to her,
"I think this will interest you," he said.
He saw Noelle stiffen, and it was almost as though
she knew what she was going;to see, The clipping was
from the New York Daily News. him caption read
"War Ace Weds" and above it was a photograph of
Larry Douglas and his bride, Noelle looked at it for a
long moment, then held out her hand for the rest of the
file. Christian Barbet shrugged, and slid all the papers
into a roanila envelope and handed it to her. As he
opened his mouth to make his farewell speech, Noelle
Page said, "K you don't have a correspondent in Washington,
get one. I shall expect Weekly reports." And
she Was gone, leaving Christian Barbet staring after her
in a state of complete confusion.
'"''When she returnedto her apartment, Noelle went
into the bedroom, locked the door and took the newspaper
clippings out of the envelope. She laid them out
on the bed before her and studied them. The photograph
of Larry was exactly as she remembered him. If
anything the image in her mind was clearer than the
onage in the newspaper, for Larry was more alive in
her amid than he was in reality.
'There was not a day that went by that Noelle did
not relive the past with him. It was as though they had
cestarred in & play together long ago, and she was able
to recapture scenes at will, playing seme On certain
days and saving ottners for other days, so that each
memory was always alive and fresh. '
Noelle tamed her attention to Larry's bride. What
she saw was a pretty, "young, intelligent face with a
smile on its lips. ' '
The face of the enemy. A face that would have to be
destroyed as Larry Was going to be destroyed.
Noelle remained locked up with the photograph the
whole afternoon.
1 Hoars later when Armand GaUtier pounded on her
bedroom door, Noelle told him to go away. He watted
outside fat him drawing room, apprehensive about what
her mood would be, but when Noelle finally emerged,
she seemed unusually bright and gay, as though she had had a piece of good
news. She offered no explanation
to Gautier, and he knew her well enough not to
ask for one,
1 After the theater that evening she made love to him
with a Wild passion that reminded him of their early
days together. Later Gautier lay in bed drying to under 205

the beautiful girl who rested beside him but he
I not have a clue.
During the night Noelle Page had a dream about
ilonei Mueller. The hairless albino Gestapo officer on torturing her with a branding iron, making burning,
in her flesh. He kept asking her questions,
his voice was so soft that Noelle could not hear
and he kept pressing the hot metal into her,-and
ienly it was Larry on the table, screaming with
, Noelle awoke in a cold sweat, her heart pounding,
1 turned on the bedside lamp. She lit a cigarette with
abling fingers and tried to calm her nerves. She «thought about Israel Kate. His leg had been amputated
Jwith an ax, and though she had not seen him since
| that afternoon at the bakery, she had received word
ifrom the concierge that he was alive but weak. It was
becoming more and more difficult to hide him, and he I was helpless on his own. The search for him had intensified.
If he was going to be transported out of Paris, it
would have to be done quickly. Noelle had really doge
nothing for which the Gestapo could arrest her: yet
Was the dream a premonition, a warning not to help
Israel Katz? She lay in bed remembering. He had aided
her when she had the abortion. He had helped her kill
Larry's baby. He had given her money and helped her
find a job. Dozens of men had done more important
things for her than he had, yet Noelle felt no debt to
them. Each of them, including her father,,had wanted
something from her, and she had paid in fell for every» thing she had ever received. Israel Katz had never
asked her for anything. She had to help him.
Noelle did not underestimate the problem. Colonel
Mueller was already suspicious of her. She remembered
her dream and shuddered. She must see to it that
Mueller was never able to prove anything against her.
Israel Katz had to be smuggled out of Paris, but how?
Noelle was' sure that all eats were closely watched.
They would be watching the roads and the river. The
Nazis might be cochons, but they were.

coc/jomj. It was a challenge and it could be a deadly
one, but she was determined to try it The problem was
that there Was no one she could turn to for help. him
Nazis had reduced Armand Gautier to a quivering gelatin.
No, she would have to do this alone. She thought
of Colonel Mueller and General Scheider, and she
wondered if a dash ever came, which one would
emerge victorious. >

The evening following Noelle's dream she and Armand Gautier attended a supper party. The host was Leslie Rocas, a wealthy patron of the arts. It was an eclectic collection of guests--bankers, artists, political leaders and a gathering of beautiful women whom No* elle a elt were there mainly for the benefit of the Germans who were present. Gautier had noticed Noelle's preoccupation, but when he asked her what was wrong, she told him that everything was fine.
Fifteen minutes before supper was announced, a new arrival lumbered through the door and the moment that Noelle saw him she knew'that her problem was going to be solved. She walked over to the hostess and said, "Darling, be an angel and put me next to Albert Heller."

Albert Heller was France's leading playwright He was a large, shambling bear of a man in his sixties with a shock of white hair and broad, sloped shoulders. He was unusually tall for a Frenchman, but he would have stood out in a crowd in any case, for he had a remarkably Ugly face and piercing green eyes that missed nothing. Heller had a vividly inventive imagination and had written more than a score of hit plays and motion pictures. He had been after Noelle to star in a new play of his and had sent her a copy of the manuscript Now as she sat next to him at dinner, Noelle said, "I just fin» ished reading your new play, Albert. I adored it."
His face lit up. "Will you do ft?"
Noelle put a hand on his. "I wish I could, darling. Armand has committed me to another play.*
||He frowned, then sighed resignedly. "Merdel Ah,
, one day we will work together."
1*1 would enjoy that," Noelle said. "I love the way write. It fascinates me the way writers create plots.
E,don't know how you do it"
He shrugged. "The same way you act It is our flrade» the way we make our living."
"No," she replied. "The ability to use your imagina impression in that way is a miracle to me." She gave an em barrassed laugh. "I know. I've been trying to write."
"Oh?" he said politely.
"Yes, but I'm stuck." Noelle took a deep breath and then looked around the table. All the other guests were engrossed in their own conversations. She leaned toward Albert Heller and lowered her voice. "I have a situation where my heroine is trying to smuggle her lover out of Paris. The Nazis are searching for him."
"Ah." The big man sat there, toying with a salad fork, drumming it against a plate. Then he said, "Easy. Have him put on a German uniform and walk right through them."
Noelle sighed and said, "There is a complication.

He's been wounded. He can't walk. He lost a leg."
The drumming suddenly stopped. There was a long pause, then Heller said, "A barge on the Seine?"
"Watched."
"And all transportation out of Paris is being searched?"
"Yes."
"Then you must have the Nazis do the work for you."
"How?"
"Your heroine," he said, without looking at Noelle, "is she attractive?"
"Yes."
"Supposing," he said, "your heroine befriended a German officer. Someone of high rank. Is that possible?"
Noelle turned to look at him, but he avoided her eyes.
"YeS."
"All right, then. Have her make a rendezvous with the officer. They drive off to spend a weekend somewhere outside Paris. Friends could arrange for your hero to be hidden in the trunk of the car. The officer must be important enough so that his car would not be searched."
"they the trunk is locked," Noelle asked, "would he not smother?"
Albert Heller took a sip of wine, quietly lost in thought. Finally he said, "Not necessarily." He spoke to Noelle for five minutes, keeping his voice low, and when he had finished, he said, "Good luck." And he still did not look at her.

Early the next morning Noelle telephoned General Scheider. An operator answered the switchboard, and a few moments later Noelle was put through to an aide and finally to the General's secretary.
"Who is calling General Scheider, please?"
"Noelle Page," she said, for the third time.
MI am sorry, but the General is in conference. He cannot be disturbed."
She hesitated. "Could I call him back later?"
"He will be in conference all day. I suggest you write the General a letter stating your business."
Noelle sat there a moment contemplating the idea and an ironic smile touched her lips.
"Never mind," she said. "Just tell him I called."
One hour later her phone rang, and it was General Hans Scheider. "Forgive me," he apologized. "That idiot didn't give me your message until just now. I would have left word foi them to put you through, but it never occurred to me that you would telephone."
"I'm the one who should apologize," Noelle said. "I know how busy you are."

"Please. What can I do for you?"
Noelle hesitated, choosing her words. "Do you remember what you said about us at dinner?"
pThere was a short pause, then "Yess,"
I've been thinking about you a great deal, Hans. I Jd like very much to see you."
"Will you have supper with me tonight?" There was tsudden eagerness in his voice.
"Not in Paris," Noelle replied. "If we're going to be a, I would like us to be away from here."
"Where?" General Scheider asked.
"I want it to be some place special Do you know at?"
"No."
"It's a lovely little village about a hundred and fifty ilometers from Paris, near Le Havre. There's a quiet Pold inn there."
"It sounds wonderful, Noelle. It's not easy for me to Iget away right now," he added apologetically. "I am in file middled!--"
"I understand," Noelle interrupted icily, "perhaps him. $ome other time."
"Wait!" There was a long pause. "When could you , get away?"
"Saturday night after the show."
"I will make arrangements," he said. "We can fly down--"
"Why don't we drive?" Noelle asked. "It's so pleasant"
"Whatever you like. I'll pick you up at the theater."
Noelle thought quickly. "I have to come home and change first. Pick me up at my apartment, would you?"
"As you wish, my tiebchen. Until Saturday night"
Fifteen minutes later Noelle was speaking to the concierge. He listened as she talked, shaking his head in vigorous protest
"No, no, no! I will tell our friend, Mademoiselle, but he will not do it He would be a fool tol You might as well ask him to go down and apply for a job at Gestapo headquarters."
"It can't fall," Noelle assured him. "The best brain in France figured it out"
When she walked out of the entrance of her apartment building that afternoon, die saw a man lounging against the wall pretending to be engrossed hi a newspaper.
As Noelle stepped into the crisp, winter air, the man straightened up and began to follow her at a discreet distance. Noelle strolled the streets slowly and leisurely, stopping to look into all the shop windows.
Five minutes after Noelle left the building, the concierge came out, glanced around to make sure he was not observed, then hailed a taxi and gave the address of a sporting goods shop in Montmartre.
Two hours later the concierge reported to Noelle.
"He will be delivered to you Saturday night"

Saturday night when Noelle finished her performance,
Colonel Kurt Mueller of the Gestapo was
waiting for her backstage. A frisson of apprehension
went through Noelle. The escape plan had been
worked out to a split-second timing, and there was no
room for any delays.
"I saw your performance from out front, Noel
Page," Colonel Mueller said. "You improve each
time."
The sound of his soft, high-pitched voice brought
her dream back vividly.
"Thank you, Colonel. If you'll excuse me, I have to
change."
Noelle started toward her dressing room, and he fell
into step beside her.
"i'll will go with you," Colonel Mueller said.
She walked into her dressing room, the hairless albino
Colonel close behind her. He made himself comfortable
in an armchair. Noelle hesitated a moment and
then began to undress 'as he watched indifferently. She
knew that he was a homosexual, which deprived her of
a valuable weapon--her sexuality.
"A little sparrow whispered something in my ear,"
Colonel Mueller said. "He is going to try to escape
tonight"
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He's heart skipped a beat, but her face showed
She began removing her makeup, fighting for
as she asked, "Who is going to try to escape
light?"
j^Your friend, Israel Kate."
; Noelle swung around, and the movement made her the conscious of the fact
that she had removed
brassiere. "I don't know any--" She caught the black triumphant gleam in his
pink eyes and saw the
just hi time. "Wait," she said. "Are you talking
at a young intern?"
^ "Ah, so you do remember him!"
"Barely. He treated me for pneumonia some time ago."
"And a self-induced abortion," Colonel Mueller said
that soft, high-pitched voice. The fear flooded back
her. The Gestapo would not have gone to this it trouble if they were not sure
that she was in volved. She was a fool to have gotten herself into this;
| but even as Noelle thought it, she knew that it was too
' late to back out. The wheels had already been set in
motion and in a few hours Israel Katz would be either
| free... or dead. And she?
Colonel Mueller was saying, "You said that the last
, time you saw Katz was at the cafe a few weeks ago."
Noelle shook her head. "I said no such thing, Colonel."

Colonel Mueller looked steadily into her eyes, then let his gaze drop insolently to her naked breasts and down her belly to her sheer pants. Then he looked up into Noelle's eyes again and sighed. "I love beautiful things," he said softly. "It would be a shame to see beauty like yours destroyed. And all for a man who means nothing to you. How is your friend planning to get away, Noel?"
There was a quietness in his voice that sent shivers down her spine. She became Annette, die innocent, helpless character in her play.
"I really don't know what you're talking about, Colonel, rd like to help you, but I don't know how."
Colonel Mueller looked at Noelle a long time, then stiffly rose to his feet "I will teach you how» FrSulein," he promised softly, "and I will enjoy ft."
He turned at the door to deliver a parting shot "By the way, I have advised General Scheider not to go away with you for the weekend."
Noelle felt her heart plummet It was too late to reach Israel Katz. "Do Colonels always interfere in the private lives of Generals?"
"In this case, no," Colonel Mueller said regretfully. "General Scheider intends to keep his rendezvous." He turned and walked out
Noelle stared after him, her heart racing. She looked at the gold clock on the dressing table and quickly began to dress.

At eleven forty-five the concierge telephoned Noelle to announce that General Scheider was on his way up to her apartment His voice was trembling.
"Is his chauffeur in the car?" Noelle asked.
"No, Mademoiselle," the concierge replied carefully. "He's on his way up with the General."
"Thank you."
Noelle replaced the receiver and hurried into the bedroom, to check her luggage once more. There must be no mistake. The front doorbell rang, and Noelle went into the living room and opened the door.
General Scheider stood in the corridor, his chauffeur, a young captain, behind him. General Scheider was out of uniform and looked very distinguished in a flawlessly cut charcoal-gray suit and a soft blue shirt and black tie. "Good evening," he said formally. He stepped inside, then nodded to his chauffeur.
"My bags are in the bedroom," Noelle said. She indicated the door.
"Thank you, FrSulein." The captain walked into the bedroom. General Scheider came over to Noelle and took her hands. "Do you know what I have been think about all day?" he asked.
"I was thinking you
tight not be here, that you might change your mind.

time the phone rang, I was afraid."
"I keep my promises," Noelle said. She watched as
tie captain came out of the bedroom carrying her
teup case and overnight bag. "Is there anything
' he asked.
"No," Noelle said. "That's all."
The captain carried the suitcases out of the apart-at.

"Ready?" General Scheider asked.
"Let's have a drink before we go," Noelle replied
;| quickly. She walked over to a bottle of champagne on
I file bar, resting in a bucket of ice.
"Let me." He moved over to the ice bucket and
I' opened the champagne.
"What shall we drink to?" he asked.
"Etratat."
He studied her a moment and then said, "Etratat."
They touched glasses hi a toast and drank. As No
elle set her glass down, she surreptitiously glanced at
her wfistwatch. General Scheider was1 talking to her,
[but Noelle only half-heard the words. Her mind was
.visualizing what was happening downstairs. She must
be very careful. If she moved too quickly or too slowly him it would be
fatal. For everyone.
"What are you thinking about?" General Scheider
asked.
Noelle turned quickly. "Nothing."
"You were not listening."
"I'm sorry. I suppose I was thinking about us." She
, turned to him and gave him a quick smile.
"You puzzle me," he said.
"Aren't all women a puzzle?"
"Not like you. I would never believe that you are
^Capricious and yet"--he made a gesture--"first you
| will not see me at all and now we are suddenly spend-p
ing a weekend in the country."
"Are you sorry, Hans?"
"Of course not But still I ask myself--why the
country?"
"I told you."
"Ah yes," General Scheider said. "It is romantic.
That is something else that puzzles me. I believe you
are a realist, not a romanticist."
"What are you trying to say?" Noelle asked.
"Nothing," the General replied easily. "I am just
thinking aloud. I enjoy solving problems, Noelle. In
time I will solve you."
She shrugged. "Once you have the solution, the
problem might not be interesting."
"We shall see." He set his glass down. "Shall we
go?"
Noelle picked up the empty champagne glasses.
'till just put these hi the sink," she said.

General Scheider watched as she walked into the
kitchen. Noelle was one of the most beautiful and desirable
women he had ever seen, and he meant to possess
her. That did not mean, however, that he was either
stupid or blind. She wanted something from him.
He intended to find out what it was. Colonel Mueller
had alerted him that she was in all probability giving
aid to a dangerous enemy of the Reich, and Colonel
Mueller made very few mistakes. If he was correct,
Noelle Page was probably counting on General Scheider
to protect her in some way. If so she knew nothing
at all about the German military mind and still less
about him. He would turn her over to the Gestapo
without a qualm, but first he would have Ms pleasure.
He was looking forward to the weekend.
Noelle came out of the kitchen. There was a worried
expression on her face. "How many bags did your
chauffeur take down?" she asked.
"Two," he replied, "An overnight bag and a makeup
case."
She made a face. "Oh dear, Fm sorry, Hans. He forgot
the other case. Do you mind?"
him watched as Noelle walked over to the telephone,
„ , it up and spoke into it. "Would you please ask
General's driver to come up again?" she said. Noel's another bag to go down."
She replaced the re
"I know we're only going to be there for the and," she smiled, "but I want to
please you." I you want to please me," General Scheider said,
will not need a lot of clothes." He glanced at a
of Armand Gautier on the piano. "Does Herr
tier know that you are going away with me?" he
id,
"Yes," Noelle lied. Armand was in Nice meeting
a producer about a motion picture, and she had
no reason to alarm him by telling him of her
us. The doorbell rang, and Noelle walked over to him door and opened it. The
captain stood there. "I un-1
there is another bag?" he asked.
"Yes," Noelle apologized. "It's in the bedroom."
The captain nodded and went into the bedroom.
"When must you return to Paris?" General Scheider
ted her.
Noelle turned and looked at him. "I'd like to stay as
; as I can. Well come back late Monday afternoon,
at will give us two days."
The captain came out of the bedroom. "Excuse me,
?raulein. What does the suitcase look Ike?"
"It is a large round blue case," Noelle said. She
led to the General. "It has a new gown in it that I
aven't worn yet. I saved it for you/'
She was babbling now, trying to cover up her ners.

The captain had gone back into the bedroom. A few

nents later, he came out again. "I am sorry," he
"I cannot find it."
"Let me," Noelle said. She went into the bedroom
began to search the closets. "That idiot of a maid
have hidden it away somewhere," she said. The him Of them looked through every closet in the apart ment. It was the General who finally found the bag in the hall closet. He lifted it and said, "It seems to be
empty."
Noelle quickly opened the bag and looked inside.
There was nothing hi it "Oh, that fool," she said. "She must have crammed that beautiful new dress in the
suitcase with my other clothes. I hope she hasn't ruined
it." She sighed in exasperation. "Do you have that
much trouble with maids hi Germany?"
"I think it is the same everywhere," General Scheider
replied. He was watching Noelle closely. She was
acting strangely, talking too much. She noticed his
look.
"You make me feel like a schoolgirl," Noelle said.
"I can't remember when I've been so nervous."
General Scheider smiled. So that was it. Or was she
playing some kind of game with him? If she was, he
would soon find it out. He glanced at his watch. "If we
do not leave now, we will get there very late."
"I'm ready," Noelle said.
She prayed the others were.
When they reached the lobby, the concierge was
standing there, his face chalk white. Noelle wondered if
something had gone wrong. She looked at him for
some signal, a sign, but before he could respond, the
General had taken Noelle's arm and was leading her
out the door.
General Scheider's limousine was parked directly in
front of the door. The trunk of the car was closed.
The street was deserted. The chauffeur sprang to open
the rear door of the car. Noelle turned to look inside
the lobby to see the concierge but the General
moved in front of her and blocked her view. Deliberately?
Noelle glanced at the closed trunk but it told
her nothing. It would be hours before she knew whether
her plan had succeeded, and the suspense was going
to be unbearable.
"Are you all right?" General Scheider was staring at
her. She felt that something had gone terribly wrong.
: had to find an excuse to go back into the lobby, to
alone with the concierge for a few seconds. She
I a smile to her lips.
"I just remembered," Noelle said. "A friend is going
> call me. I must leave a message--"
General Scheider gripped her arm.
"Too late," he smiled. "From this moment on you
think only of me." And he guided her into the a. A moment later they were on their way.

Five minutes after General Scheider's limousine owe away from the apartment building, a black Mercies
screeched to a stop in front of the building and
olonel Mueller and two other Gestapo men spilled
of the car. Colonel Mueller looked hurriedly up and down the street. "They've gone," he said. The men wanted into fhe lobby of Noelle's apartment building rang the concierge's doorbell. The door opened
|and the concierge stood in the doorway, a startled expression
on his face. "What--?" Colonel Mueller
pshoved him inside his small apartment.
"Ftaulein Page!" he snapped. "Where is she?"
The concierge stared at him, panicky.
"She--she left," he said.
"I know that, you stupid fool! I asked you where she
I went!"
The concierge shook his head helplessly. "I have no
? idea, Monsieur. I only know she left with an army officer."
"Didn't she tell you where she could be reached?"
"N--No, Monsieur. Mademoiselle Page does not him confide in me."
1 Colonel Mueller glared at the old man a moment
and then turned on his heel.
"They can't have gotten far," he said to his men.
"Contact all the roadblocks as fast as you can. Tell
them that when General Scheider's car arrives I want
them to hold it and call me at once!"
Because of the hour military traffic was light, which
meant that there was virtually no traffic at all. General
Scheider's car swung onto the West Road that led out
of Paris, passing Versailles. They drove through Mantes, Vernon, and Gaillon and in twenty-five minutes they
were approaching the major arterial intersection that
branched out into Vichy, Le Havre and the Cote
d'Azur.
It seemed to Noelle that a miracle had happened.
They were going to get out of Paris without being
stopped. She should have known that even the Germans
with all their efficiency would not be able to
check every single road out of the city. And even as
she thought it, out of the darkness ahead of them
loomed a roadblock. Flashing red lights blinked from
the center of the road, and in back of the lights a German
Army lorry blocked the highway. On the side of
the road were half a dozen German soldiers and two
French police cars. A German Army lieutenant waved
down the limousine and, as it came to a stop, he
walked over to the driver.
"Get out and show your identification!"
General Scheider opened the rear window, leaned
his head out and said, raspingly: "General Scheider.
What the hell's going on here?"
The lieutenant snapped to attention.
"Excuse me, General. I did not know it was your

car."
The General's eyes flicked over the roadblock.
"What's this all about?"
"We have orders to inspect every vehicle leaving
Paris, Herr General. Every exit from the city is
blocked."
The General turned to Noelle. The damned
Gestapo. I'm sorry, Uebchen."
Noelle could feel the color drain from her face, and
she was grateful for the darkness of the car. When she
spoke, her voice was steady.
"It's not important," she said.
She thought of the cargo in the trunk. If her plan
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him "Worked, Israel Katz was in there, and in a moment
| would be caught. And so would she.
The German lieutenant turned to the chauffeur.
"Open the luggage compartment, please."
|/ "There's nothing in there but luggage," the captain
(tested. "I put it in myself." "I'm sorry, Captain. My orders are clear. Every we
out of Paris is to be inspected. Open it."
Muttering under his breath, the driver opened his
or and started to get out. Noelle's mind was racing
ausly. She had to find a way to stop them, without
rousing their suspicions. The driver was out of the
Time had run out Noelle stole a quick look at
aeral Scheider's face. His eyes were narrowed and
lips were tight with anger. She turned to him and
ád guilelessly, "Shall we get out, Hans? Will they be
hing us?" She could fed his body tense with fury.
"Wait!" The General's voice was like the crack of a
srhip. "Get back in the car," he ordered his driver. He
to the lieutenant and his voice was filled with
"You tell whoever gave you your orders that they
pfo not apply to generals of the German Army. I do not
| take orders from lieutenants. Get that roadblock out of
if lay way."
The hapless lieutenant stared at the General's furious
face, clicked his heels to attention and said, "Yes,
('General Scheider." He signaled the driver of the truck
blocking the road and the truck lumbered off to the
Bide.
"Drive on," General Scheider commanded.
And the car aped away into the night.
Slowly Noelle let her body relax into the seat, feeling
| the tension draining out of her. The crisis was past. She
I wished that she knew whether Israel Katz was in the
', trunk of the car. And if he was alive.
General Scheider turned to Noelle and she could feel
| the anger that was still seething in him.

"I apologize," he said, wearily. "This is a strange him War. Sometimes it is necessary to remind the Gestapo

' 1 I

that wars are run by armies."
Noelle smiled up at him and put her arm through his. "And armies are run by generals."
"Exactly," he agreed. "Armies are run by generals. I am going to have to teach Colonel Mueller a lesson."

Ten minutes after General Scheider's car had left the roadblock, a phone call came hi from Gestapo Headquarters, alerting them to be on the lookout for the car.
"It has already passed through," the lieutenant reported, a feeling of foreboding flooding through him. A moment later he was speaking with Colonel Mueller.
"How long ago?" the Gestapo officer asked softly.
"Ten minutes."
"Did you search his car?"
The lieutenant felt his bowels turn to water. "No, sir. The General would not permit--"
"Scheiss! Which way was he headed?"
The lieutenant swallowed. When he spoke again, it was in the hopeless voice of a man who knew that his future was finished.
"I am not certain," he replied. "This is a large crossroad here. He could have been going inland to Rouen or to the sea, to Le Havre."
"I want you to present yourself to Gestapo Headquarters at nine and. tomorrow. My office."
"Yes, sir," the lieutenant responded.
Savagely Colonel Mueller rang off. He turned to the two men at his side and said, "Le Havre. Get my car. We're going cockroach-hunting!"

The road to Le Havre winds along the Seine, through the beautiful Seine Valley with its rich hills and fertile farms. It was a clear, starlit night and the farmhouses in the distance were pools of light, like oases in the darkness.
In the comfortable back seat of the limousine Noelle and General Scheider talked. He told her about his wife and his children and how difficult marriage was ran army officer. Noelle listened sympathetically and him how difficult a romantic life was for an ac-Each was aware that the conversation was a both of them keeping the talk on a superficial that would give away no insights. Noelle did not a moment underestimate the intelligence of the man beside her, and she fully understood how dan-was the adventure in which she was engaged, knew that General Scheider was too clever to be-that

she had suddenly found him irresistible, that
must suspect that she was after something. What Noelle was counting on was that she would be able to
aeuver him in the game they were playing. him
icral touched only briefly on the war, but he said
aething that she remembered long afterward.
"The British are a strange race," he said. "In peace-they
are~ impossible to manage, but in a crisis
|[£hey are magnificent. The only time a British sailor is
fitruly happy is when his ship is sinking."
They reached Le Havre hi the small hours of the
I on their way to the village of EtrataL
"May we stop for a bite to eat?" Noelle asked. "I'm \ Starved."
General Scheider nodded. *Of course, if you wish."
v He raised his voice. "Look for an all-night restaurant."
"Em sure there*s oae by the pier," Noelle suggested,
[The captain obediently swung the car toward the
waterfront. He stopped the tar at the water's edge,
; where several cargo ships were tied to the pier. A block
l^ttway a sign said, "Bistro."
; The captain opened the door and Noelle got out, a followed by General Scheider.
"It's probably open all nighi for the dock workers,"
Noelle said. She heard the sound of a motor and him turned around. A cargo-loading forklift had driven up : and stopped near the limousine. Two men wearing cov-|
«rails and long, visored caps that concealed their faces
I got out of the machine. One of the men looked hard at \ Noelle, then took out a tool kit and began to tighten
the forklift 'Noelle felt the muscles in her stomach constrict.
She took General Scheider's aim and they started
toward the restaurant. Noelle looked back at the
chauffeur sitting behind the wheel.
"Wouldn't he like some coffee?" Noelle asked.
"He will stay with the car," the General said.
Noelle stared at him. The chauffeur must not stay
with the car or everything would be ruined. Yet Noelle
dared not insist.
They walked on toward the cafe over the rough,
uneven cobblestones. Suddenly, as she took a step, her
ankle turned and Noelle fell, letting out a sharp cry of
pain. General Scheider reached out and vainly tried to
grab her before her body hit the cobblestones.
"Are you all right?" he asked.
The chauffeur, seeing what had happened, moved
from behind the wheel of the car and started hurrying
toward them.
"I'm so sorry," Noelle said. "I--I turned my ankle.
It feels like it's broken."
General Scheider ran his hand expertly over her ankle.
"There is no swelling. It is probably just a sprain.
Can you stand on it?"
"I--I don't know," Noelle said.

The chauffeur reached her side and the two men
lifted her to her feet Noelle took a step and the ankle
gave way under her.
"I'm sorry," she moaned. "If I could just sit down."
"Help me get her in there," General Scheider said,
indicating the cafe.
With the two men supporting her on either side, they
walked into the restaurant. As she walked through the
door, Noelle risked a quick look back at the car. The
two dock workers were at the trunk of the limousine.
"Are you sure you wouldn't rather go straight on to
the Etratat?" the General was asking.
"No, believe me, I'll be fine," Noelle replied.
The proprietor led them to a corner table, and the
two men eased Noelle into a chair.
I<p°"

9 "Are you in much pain?" General Scheider asked.
"A bit," Noelle replied. She put her hand on his. wasn't worry. I won't let this spoil anything for you,

1

1 At the moment Noelle and General Hans Seheider
fcL.--, sjfljug ju the caf^ Colonel Mueller and twoifif his
were speeding into the city limits of Le Havre.
tie local captain of police had been roused front his
and was waiting for the Gestapo men in front of
police station. "A gendarme has located the Gen's
car," he said. "It is parked down by the water-Pront." ,
,
A gleam of satisfaction came into Colonel Mueller's
"Take me there," he commanded. & Five minutes later, the Gestapo automobile with
I «Colonel Mueller, his two men and the police captain
raced up beside General Scheider's automobile on the
pier. The men got out and surrounded the car. At that
|n moment General Scheider, Noelle and the chauffeur
were starting to leave the bistro. The chauffeur was .the
first to notice the men at the car. He started hurrying
toward them. ' him
him, "What's happening?" Noelle asked, and1 even as she
spoke she recognized the figure of Colonel Mueller in
', the distance and felt a cold chill go through her,
"I don't know," General Scheider said. He started
toward the limousine with long strides, Noelle limping
after him.
"What are you doing here?" General Scheider asked

Colonel Mueller as he reached the car.
"I am sorry to <Hsturb your holiday," Colonel Mueller replied curtly. "I would like to inspect the trunk of your car, General."
"There is nothing but luggage in there."
Noelle reached the group. She noticed that the forklift had gone. The General and the Gestapo men were glaring at each other.
"I must insist, General. I have reason to believe to a wanted enemy of the Third Reich is hiding in there and that your guest is his accomplice."
General Scbeider stared at him for a long moment, then turned to study Noelle.
"I don't know what he's talking about," she said 'irmly. >
The General's eyes traveled down to her ankle, then he made a decision' and turned to fate chauffeur. "Open it"
Hfes, General."
AH eyes were riveted on the trunk as the chauffeur reached for the handle and turned it Noelle felt suddenly faint. Slowly the lid opened.
The trunk was empty,
"Someone has stolen our luggage!" exclaimed the chauffeur.
Gtoionel Muellef him face was mottled with fury. "He got away!"
"Who got away?" demanded the General.
*Le Cafard," raged Colonel Mueller. "A Jew named Israel Katz. He was smuggled out of Paris in the trunk «a this car."
"That's impossible," General Scheider retorted.
'"That trunk was tightly closed. He would have suffocated,"
< '
Colonel Mueller studied the trunk for a moment, then turned to one of hi& men. "Get inside."
«¥es, Colonel."
Obediently the man crawled into the trunk. Colonel Mueller slammed the lid tightly shut and looked at his watch. For the next four minutes, they stood there in silence, each engrossed in his own thoughts. Finally after what Seemed an eternity to Noelle, Colonel Mueller opened the lid of the trunk. The man inside Was unconscious. General Scheider turned to Colonel Mueller, a contemptuous expression on Ms face. "If anyone was riding in that trunk," the General declared, "they removed his corpse. Is there anything else can doforyou,Coloneir "
Gestapo officer shook his head, seething with and frustration. General Scheider turned to his eur. "Let's go." He helped Noelle into the car, key drove toward Etratat, leaving the knot of men no away into the distance.
ilonel Kurt Mueller instituted an immediate search him waterfront, but it was

not until late the following
an that an empty oxygen tank was found hi a
in a corner of an unused warehouse. An African
liter had set sail for cape town out of Le Havre the
before but it was now somewhere on the high
The missing luggage turned up a few days later in
it-and-found department of the Gare du Nord in

for Noelle and General Scheider, they spent the
ékend in Etratat and returned to Paris late Monday
ernoon in tune for Noelle to do her evening per-ance.v

CATHERINE

Washington; 1941-1944

Catherine had quit her job with ^HÍara Fraser the
morning after she had married Larry. Fraser asked her
to have lunch with him the day she returned to Washington,
He looked drawn and haggard and suddenly
older. Catherine had felt a pang of compassion for
him, but that was all. She was sitting opposite a tall,
nice-looking stranger for whom she felt affection, but it
was impossible now to imagine that she had ever contemplated
marrying him. Fraser gave her a wan smile.

"So you're a married lady," he said.

The most married lady hi the world."

"It must have happened rather suddenly. I--I wish
Td had a chance to compete."

"/ didn't even have a chance," Catherine said honestly,
"It just--happened."

"Larry's quite a fellow."

"Yes."

"Catherine"--Fraser hesitated--"you don't really
know much about Larry, do you?"

Catherine felt her back stiffening.

"I know I love bun, Bill," she said evenly, "and I
know that he loves me. That's a pretty good beginning,
isn't it?"

He sat there frowning, silent, debating with himself.
"Catherine--"

"Yes?"

"Be careful.'*

"Of what?" she asked.

Fraser spoke slowly, feeling his way carefully over a

aefield of words. "Larry's--different."
"How?" she asked, refusing to help him.
"I mean, he's not like most men." He saw the look him her face. "Oh, hell,"
he said. "Don't pay any atten-to
me." He managed a faint grin. "You've prob-read
the biography Aesop did on me. The fox and him sour grapes."
Catherine took his hand affectionately. 'till never
get you, Bill. I hope we can remain friends."
"I hope so too," Fraser said. "Are you sure you
i't stay on at the office?"
"Larry wants me to quit. He's old-fashioned. He be-i
that husbands should support their wives."
"If you ever change your mind," Fraser said, "let me
fiow." The rest of the luncheon was concerned with
affairs and a discussion of who would take Catherine's place. She knew she would miss Bill Fraser
much. She supposed that the first man to seduce a
?rl would always hold a special place in that girl's life,
tit Bill had meant something to her beyond that. He
as a dear man and a good friend. Catherine was dis-by
his attitude toward Larry. It was as though
had started to warn her about something and then
I stopped because he was afraid of spoiling her hap-|f»ness.
Or was it as he had said, just a case of sour
| grapes? Bill Fraser was not a small man or a jealous
Jinan. He would surely want her to be happy. And yet
pCatherine was sure he had tried to tell her something.
Somewhere in the back of her mind was a vague fore-j
boding. But an hour later when she met Larry and he
limited at her, everything went out of her head but the I ecstasy of being married to this incredible, joyful, human
being.

Larry was more fun to be with than anyone Cather«!ne
had ever known. Each day was an adventure, a
[lioliday. They drove out to the country every weekend
land stayed at small inns and explored county fairs.
^They went to Lake Placid and rode the huge toboggan

slide and to Montauk where they went boating and
fishing. Catherine was terrified of the water because
she had never learned to swim, but Larry told her not to worry about it, arid with him she felt safe.
Larry was loving and attentive and appeared to be
remarkably unaware of the attraction he held for other

women. Catherine seemed to be all that he wanted. On
their honeymoon Larry had come across a little saver
bird in an antique shop and Catherine had liked it so
much that he had found a crystal bird for her and it
had become the start of a collection. On a Saturday
night they drove to Maryland to celebrate their third-month
anniversary and had dinner at the same little
restaurant.
The next day, Sunday, December 7, Pearl Harbor
was attacked by the Japanese.

America's declaration of war against Japan came the
following day at 1:32 p.m., less than twenty-four hours
after the Japanese attack. On Monday while Larry was
at Andrews Air Base, Catherine, unable to bear being
alone in the apartment, took a taxi to the Capitol
Building to see what was happening. Knots of people
pressed around a dozen portable radio sets scattered
through the crowd that lined the sidewalks of the Capitol
Plaza. Catherine watched as the Presidential caravan
raced up die drive and stopped at the south entrance
to the Capitol. She was close enough to see the
limousine door open and President Roosevelt disembark,
assisted by two aides. Dozens of policemen stood
at every corner, alert for trouble. The mood of the
crowd seemed to Catherine to be mainly outrage, like a
lynch mob eager to get into action.
Five minutes after President Roosevelt entered the
Capitol, his voice came over the radio, as he addressed light will win ... We
will gain the inevitable
, so help us, God."
minutes after Roosevelt had entered die
House Joint Resolution 254 was passed, de-war
on Japan. It was passed unanimously ex-Representative
Jeannette Rankin of Montana,
against the declaration of war, so the final
388 to 1. President Roosevelt's speech had
exactly ten minutes--the shortest war message
livered to an American Congress,
crowd outside cheered, a full-throated roar of
anger and a promise of vengeance. America
jally on the move.
ierine studied the men and women standing near
lie faces of the men were filled with the same
exhilaration that she had seen on Larry's face
ay before, as though they all belonged to the same
; club whose members felt that war was an excit-Even
the women seemed caught up by the
aus enthusiasm that swept through the crowd, Catherine wondered how they
would feel when
men were gone and the women stood alone wait-jior
news of their husbands and sons. Slowly
tie turned and walked back toward the apart-On

the corner she saw soldiers with fixed bay-she
thought, the whole country would be in

happened even faster than Catherine had antici-Almost
overnight Washington was transformed
. a world of a citizen army in khaki.
lie air was filled with an electric, contagious excite
It was as though peace were a lethargy, a mi-that
filled mankind with a sense of ennui, and it
only war that could stimulate man to the full ex-ion she had never learned to swim, but Larry told her not
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air was filled with an electric, contagious excite-at.
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filled mankind with a sense of ennui, and it
only war that could stimulate man to the full ex-ation told Catherine that the situation at Pearl Harbor and
Hickam Field was much worse than die,people had
been led to believe. The sneak attack had been devastatingly
successful. For all practical purposes America's
Navy and a good part of its Air Corps had been
destroyed.
"Are you saving that we could lose this war?"
Catherine asked, shocked.
Larry looked at her thoughtfully. "It depends, on
how fast we can get ready," he replied. "Everyone
thinks of the Japanese as funny little men -with weak
eyes. That's horseshit. They're tough, and they're not
afraid to die. We're soft."

In the months that followed it seemed that nothing
could stop'the Japanese. The daily headlines screamed
out their successes: They were attacking Wake . . .
softening up the Philippine Islands for invasion . . .
landing in Guam ... hi Borneo ... in Hong Kong.
General MacArthur declared Manila an open city, and
the trapped American troops in the Philippines surrendered.
One day in April, Larry telephoned Catherine from
the Base and asked her to meet him downtown for dinner
at the Willard Hotel to celebrate.
"Celebrate what?" Catherine asked.
"I'll teU you tonight," Larry replied. There was a
note of high excitement in his voice.
When Catherine hung up, she was filled with a dread
premonition. She tried to think of all the possible reasons
that Larry would have to celebrate, but it always

came back to the same thing and she did not think she
would have the strength to face it.
At five o'clock that afternoon Catherine was fully
dressed, sitting on her bed staring into the dressing-room
mirror.
/ must be wrong, she thought. Maybe he's been promoted.
That's what we're celebrating. Or he's had
231

I good news about the war. Catherine told herself
^ but she did not believe it. She studied herself in the
or, trying to be objective. While she would not give
Bergman any sleepless nights, she was, she de-dispassionately,
attractive. Her figure was good,
1 of provocative curves. You're intelligent, cheerful,
'teous, kind and a sex pot, she told herself. Why did any normal red-blooded
male be dying to leave
so that he could go off to war and try to get him-F killed?
It seven o'clock Catherine walked into the dining
of the Willard Hotel. Larry had not arrived yet,
the maítre d' escorted her to a table. She said no
would not have a drink, then nervously changed mind and ordered a martini.
jiWhen the waiter brought it and Catherine started to
it up, she found that her hands were shaking. She
Iced up and saw Larry moving toward her. He
his way between the tables, acknowledging
etings along the way. He carried with him that in-dible
vitality, that aura that made every eye turn in
direction. Catherine watched him, remembering the
|iy he had come to her table at the MGM commissary
Hollywood. She realized how little she had known
then, and she wondered how well she knew him
bw. He reached the table and gave her a quick kiss on I cheek.
"Sorry I'm late, Cathy," he apologized. "The Base
been a madhouse aU day." He sat down, greeted
captain by name and ordered a martini. If he no-that
Catherine was drinking, he made no com-ent
Catherine's mind was screaming out: Tell me your
rprise. Tell me what we're celebrating. But she said
othing. There was an old Hungarian proverb: "Only a
al rushes bad news." She took another sip of her
lartini. Well maybe it wasn't an old Hungarian provb.
Maybe it was a new Catherine Douglas proverb
designed to be worn over thin skins for protection.
Maybe the martini was making her a little drunk. If her
premonition was right, before this night was over she
was going to get very drunk. Bat looking at Larry now,
his face filled with love, Catherine knew that she had
to be wrong. Larry could not bear to leave her any
more than she could bear to leave him. She had been
building up a nightmare out of whole cloth. From the
happy expression on his face she knew that he had

some really good news to tell her.
Larry was leaning toward her, smiling his boyish
smile, taking her hand in his.
"You'll never guess what's happened, Cathy. Tm
going overseas."
It was as though a filmy curtain descended, giving
everything an unreal, hazy look. Larry was sitting next
to her, his lips moving, but his face was going hi and
out of focus and Catherine could not hear any words.
She looked over his shoulder and the walls of the restaurant
were moving together and receding. She
watched, fascinated.
"Catherine!" Larry was shaking her arm and slowly
her eyes focused on him and everything came back to
normal. "Are you all right?"
Catherine nodded, swallowed and said, shakily,
^Great. Good news always does that to me."
"You understand that I have to do this, don't you?"
"Yes, I understand." The truth is, I wouldn't understand
if I lived to be a million years old, my darling.
But if I told you that, you'd hate me, wouldn't you? Who needs a nagging
wife? Heroes' wives should send
their men off smiling.
Larry was watching, concerned. "You're crying."
"I am not," Catherine said indignantly and found to
her horror that she was. "I--I just have to get used to
the idea."
"They're giving me my own squadron," Larry said.
"Are they really?" Catherine tried to pump pride
her voice. His own squadron. When he was a '. boy, he probably had had his
own set of trains to
with. And now that he was a tall boy, they had
en him his own squadron to play with. And these
real toys, guaranteed to get shot down and bleed
| die. "I'd like another drink," she said.
|JOf course." j^When--when will you have to leave?"
l^ot until next month."
; He made it sound as though he were eager to get
It was terrifying, feeling the whole fabric of her
age being torn apart. On the bandstand a singer
crooning, "A trip to the moon on gossamer wings
^ ." Gossamer, she thought Thai's what my marriage
Wade of: gossamer. That Cole Porter knew every-ing.
no» "We'll have-plenty of time before I leave," Larry was
^ng-^Plenty
of time for what? Catherine wondered bitr
iy, Plenty of time to raise a family, to take our chfy»
him skiing in Vermont, to grow old together? "What would you like to do
tonight?" «Larry asked. Td like to go down to the County Hospital and have
of your toes removed. Or have one of your ear MIS pierced. Aloud, Catherine
said, "Let's go home
make love." And there was a fierce, desperate ur-by
in her.

The next four weeks melted away. The clocks raced
vard in a Kafka-ish nightmare that turned days into
and hours into minutes, and then incredibly it
Larry's last day. Catherine drove him to the air-brt.
He was talkative and happy and gay and she was
riber and quiet and miserable. The last few minutes get a kaleidoscope of reporting in ... a hurried
d-bye kiss . . . Larry entering the plane that was to
him away from her ... a last farewell wave.
: stood on the field watching his plane dwindle

to a small speck in the sky and finally disappear. She
stood there for an hour, and finally when it got dark
she turned and drove back into town to her empty
apartment

In the first year following the attack on Pearl Harbor,
ten great sea and air battles were fought against
the Japanese. The Allies won only three, but two of
them were, decisive: Midway and the Battle of Guadalcanal.
Catherine read word for word the newspaper reports
of every battle and then asked William Eraser to get
her further details. She wrote to Larry daily, but it was
eight weeks before she received his first letter. It was
optimistic and full of excitement. The letter had been
heavily censored so Catherine had no idea where he
had been or what he was doing. Whatever it was she
had a feeling that he seemed to be enjoying it, and in
the long lonely hours of the night Catherine lay in bed
puzzling over that, trying to figure out what it was in
Larry that made him respond to the challenge of war and death. It was not that he had a death wish, for
Catherine had never known anyone more alive and vital;
but perhaps that was simply the other side of the
coin, that what made the life-sense so keen was constantly
honing it against death.
She had lunch with William Fraser. Catherine knew
that he had tried to enlist and had been told by the
White House that he could do more good by staying at
his post. He had been bitterly disappointed. He had
never mentioned it to Catherine, however. Now as
Fraser sat across from Catherine at the luncheon table,
he asked:
"Have you heard from Larry?"
"I got a letter last week."
"What did he say?"
"Well, according to the letter, the war is a kind of
football game. We lost the first scrimmage, but now
sent the first team in, and we're gaining
PI

> nodded. "That's Larry."

: that's not the war," Catherine said quietly. 'It's football game, Bill. Millions of people are going > killed before this is over."
you're hi it, Catherine," he said gently, "I irnag's easier to think of it as a football game."
icrine had decided that she wanted to go to
The Army had created a branch for women him the WACs, and Catherine! had thought of joining a bad felt she might be more useful doing something than driving cars and answering telephones. Al-from what she had heard, the WACs were
colorful. There was so much pregnancy among him that there was a rumor that when volunteers went
|fe»r their physical examination, die doctors pressed ' stomachs with a tiny rubber stamp. The girls tried ~: the words but were unable to do so. Finally one
[.them hit upon the idea of getting a magnifying glass, him words read: "When you can read this with the na-I
eye, report to me."
Now as she sat lunching with Bill Fraser, she said, "I : to work. I want to do something to help."
, He studied her a moment, then nodded. "I may 3W just the thing for you, Catherine. The Govérnt's trying to sell War Bonds. I think you could help Drdinate it."
Two weeks later Catherine went to work organizing sale of War Bonds by celebrities. It had sounded iiculously easy hi concept, but the execution of it Was nething else again. She found the stars to be like ildren, eager and excited about helping the war ef-but difficult to pin down about specific dates, fieir schedules had to be constantly juggled. Often it not their fault, because pictures were delayed or chedules ran over. Catherine found herself commuting am Washington to Hollywood and New York. She

got used to leaving on an hour's notice, packing enough clothes to last the length of each trip. She met dozens of celebrities.

"Did you really meet Gary Grant?" her secretary asked her when she returned from a trip to Hollywood.

"We had lunch together."

"Is he as charming as they say?"

"If he could package it," Catherine declared, "he'd be the richest man in the world."

It happened so gradually that Catherine was almost unaware of it It had been six months earlier, when Bill Fraser told her about a problem that Wallace 'Turner was having with one of the advertising accounts that Catherine used to handle. Catherine had laid out a new campaign using a humorous approach, and the client had been very pleased. A few weeks later Bill had asked Catherine to help on another account, and before she realized it she was spending more than half her tune with the advertising agency. She was in charge of half a dozen accounts, all of them doing well. Fraser had given her a large salary and a percentage. At noon on the day before Christmas Fraser came into her office. The rest of the staff had gone home, and Catherine was finishing up some last minute work.

"Having fun?" he asked.

"It's a living," she smiled and added warmly, "and a generous one. Thanks, Bill."

"Don't thank me. You've earned every penny of it--and then some. It's the 'then some' I want to talk to you about. I'm offering you a partnership."

She looked at him in surprise, "A partnership?"

"Half the new accounts we got in the last six months are because of you." He sat there looking at her thoughtfully, saying nothing more. And she understood how much it meant to him.

"You have a partner," she said.

His face lit up. "I can't tell you how pleased I am." Awkwardly, he held out his hand. She shook her head,

I past his outstretched arm, hugged him and gave him a kiss on the cheek, low that we're partners," she teased, "I can kiss you" She felt him suddenly hold her tighter.
athy,"hesaid,"I. . ."
Catherine put her finger to his lips. "Don't say any, Bill. Let's leave it the way it is." you know Fm in love with you."
|f'And I love you," she said warmly. Semantics, she tight. The difference between "I love you" and "I'm ?ve with you" was a bridgeless chasm.
Eiraser smiled. "I won't bother you, I promise. I re-t the way you feel about Larry."
hank you, Bill." She hesitated. "I don't know

ther this helps any, but if there ever were anyone
, it would be you."
,t's a great help," he grinned. "It's going to keep him awake all night."
Noelle
Paris: 1944

10

During the past year Armand Gautier had ceased broaching the subject of marriage. In the beginning he had felt himself in a superior position to Noelle. Now, however, the situation was almost reversed. When they gave newspaper interviews, it was Noelle to whom the questions were directed, and wherever they went together, Noelle was the attraction, he was the afterthought.
Noelle was the perfect mistress. She continued to make Gautier comfortable, act as his hostess and in effect make him one of the most envied men in France; but in truth he never had a moment's peace, for he knew that he did not possess Noelle, nor ever could, that there would come a day when she would walk out of his life as capriciously as she had wandered into it and when he remembered what had happened to him the one time that Noelle had left him, Gautier felt sick to his stomach. Against every instinct of his intellect, his experience and his knowledge of women he was wildly, madly in love with Noelle. She was the single most important fact of his life. He would lie awake nights devising elaborate surprises to make her happy and when they succeeded, he was rewarded with a smile or a kiss or an unsolicited night of lovemaking. Whenever she looked at another man, Gautier was filled with jealousy, but he knew better than to speak of it to Noelle. Once after a party when she had spent the entire evening talking to a renowned doctor, Gautier had been furious with her. Noelle had listened to and then had answered quietly, *H my
to other men bothers you, Armand. I wjl I my things out tonight."
»had never brought up the subject again.

the beginning of February, Noelle began her
It had started as a simple Sunday brunch with a
i'of their friends from the theater, but as word about
. around, it quickly expanded and began to include
cians, scientists, writers--anyone whom the group
lit might be interesting or amusing. Noelle was
"mistress of the salon and one of the chief attrac-Everyone
found himself eager to talk to her, for
asked incisive questions and remembered the
She learned about politics from politicians
about finance from bankers. A leading art expert
hef about art, and she soon knew all the great
artists who were living in France, She learned

: wine from the chief vintner of Baron Rothschild
about architecture from Corbusier. Noelle had the
tutors in the world and they hi turn had a beauti-and
fascinating student. She had a quick probing
* and was an intelligent listener. Armand Gautier
the feeling that he was watching a Princess con-tig
with her ministers, and had he only been aware lit, it was the closest he
would ever come to under-rjg
Noelle's character.
iijAsi the months went by Gautier began to feel a little
secure. It seemed to him that Noelle had met eve
who might matter to her and she had shown no
st in any of them, on She had not yet met Constantin Demiris.

him, Constantin Demiris was the ruler of an empire larger
"|d more powerful than most countries. He had no
|e or official position, but he regularly bought and I'm prime ministers,
cardinals, ambassadors and kings,
niris was one of the two or three wealthiest men in
»world and his powei; was legendary. He owned the

largest fleet of cargo ships afloat, an airline, newspapers,
banks, steel mills, gold mines--his tentacles were
everywhere, inextricably woven throughout the woof
and warp of the economic fabric of dozens of countries.
He had one of the most important art collections in
the world, a fleet of private planes and a dozen apartments
and villas scattered around the globe.
Constantin Demiris was above medium height, with
a barrel chest and broad shoulders. His features were
swarthy, and he had a broad Greek nose and olive
black eyes that blazed with intelligence. He was not interested
in clothes, yet he was always on the list of
best-dressed men and it was rumored that he owned
over five hundred suits. He had his clothes made wherever
he happened to be. His suits were tailored by
Hawes and Curtis in London, his shirts by Brioni in
Rome, shoes by Daliet Grande in Paris and ties from a
dozen countries.
Demiris had about him a presence that was magnetic.
When he walked into a room, people who did not
know who he was would turn to stare. Newspapers and
magazines all over the world had written an incessant
spate of stories about Constantin Demiris and his activities,
both business and social.
The Press found him highly quotable. When asked
by a reporter if friends had helped him achieve his success,
he had replied, "To be successful, you need
friends. To be very successful, you need enemies,"
When he was asked how many employees he had,
Demiris had said, "None. Only acolytes. When this
much power and money is involved, business turns into
religion and offices become temples."

He had been reared in the Greek Orthodox Church,
but he said of organized religion: "A thousand times
more crimes have been committed in the name of love
than in the name of hate."
The world knew that he was married to the daughter
of an old Greek banking family, that his wife was an.

gracious lady and that when Demiris entern
his yacht of on his private island, his wife
went with him. Instead, he would be accom-by
a beautiful actress or ballerina off .whoever
struck his current fancy. His romantic escapades
as legendary and as colorful as his financial ad-He
had bedded dozens of motion picture
the wives of his best friends, a fifteen-year-old
freshly bereaved widows, and it was even
red that he had Once been propositioned > by ft
of nuns who needed a new convent. ,
alf a dozen books, had been written about Demiris,
none of them had ever touched on the essence of
man or managed to reveal the wellspring of his sue-j
One of the most public figures in the world, Coa-tin
Demiris was 9 very private person, and be
lipulated his public image as a facade, fhat con-his
real self. He had dozens of intimate friends
i'pvery walk of life and yet no one ,rpally,ktiew him.
' '-a facts Wiete a matter of public record.» He, ha4>
" life in Hraeus as the son of a stevedo^.jn a
ily of fourteen brothers and sisters where, there
never enough food on the taljle and if anyone wanted anything extra, he had
to fight for it. There, w^is
ething in Demiris that constantly demanded more,
he fought for it. ',,
"''Even as a small boy Demiris' trifod automatically
verted everything into mathematics'. He knew the of steps on the Parthenon,
how nlariy minxes
took to walk to school, the number of boats to the
-bor on a given day. Time was a number divided
to segments, and Demiris learned not to waste it. The'
was that without any real effort, he was able to
tplish a tremendous amount. His sense of organl-ion
was instinctive, a talent that operated automatí-illy in even the smallest
things he did. Everything b@v
a game of matching his wits against those around

1 I 'if!,
While Demiris was aware that he was cleverer than

most men, he had no excess vanity. When a beautiful woman wanted to go to bed with him, he did not for an instant flatter himself that it was because Of his looks or personality, but he never permitted that to bother him. The world was a market-place, and people were either buyers or sellers. Some women, he knew, were attracted by his money, some by his power and a few--a rare few--by his mind and imagination.

Nearly every person he met wanted something from him: a donation to a charity, financing for a business project or simply the power that his friendship could bestow. Demiris enjoyed the challenge of figuring out exactly what it was that people were really after, for it was seldom what it appeared to be. His analytical mind was skeptical of surface truth, and as a consequence he befieved nothing he heard and trusted no one. '

The reporters who chronicled his life were permitted to see only his geniality and charm, the sophisticated urbane man of the world. They never suspected that beneath the surface, Demiris was a killer, a gutter-fighter Whose instinct was to go for the jugular vein.

To the ancient Greeks the word thekaeossini, justice, was Often synonymous with ékthekissis, vengeance, and Demiris was obsessed with both. He remembered every slight he had ever suffered, and those who were unlucky enough to incur his enmity were paid back a hundredfold. They were never even aware of it, for Demiris' mathematical mind made a game of exacting retribution, patiently working out elaborate traps, spinning complex webs that finally caught and destroyed its victims.

When Demiris was sixteen years old, he had gone into his first business enterprise with an older man named Spyros Nicholas. Demiris had conceived the idea of opening a small stand on the docks to serve hot food' to the stevedores on the night shift. He had scraped together half the money for the enterprise, but when it had become successful Nicholas had forced

tout of the business and had taken it over himself, is had accepted his fate without protest and bad : ahead to other enterprises.
the next twenty years Spyros Nicholas had into the meat-packing business and had become land successful. He had married, had three children was one of the most prominent men hi Greece, those years, Demiris patiently sat back and let

las build his little empire. When he decided that
tiolas was as successful and as happy as he was ever
; to be, Demiris struck.
se his business was booming, Nicholas was
opiating buying farms to raise his own meat and
a chain of retail stores. An enormous amount
1 money was required. Constantin Demiris owned the
with which Nicholas did business, and the bank
puraged Nicholas to borrow money for expansion
; interest rates that Nicholas could not resist. Nicholas
aged heavily, and in the midst of the expansion his
were suddenly called in by the bank. When the
Idered man protested that he could not make the
icnts, the bank immediately began foreclosure
The newspapers owned by Demiris prom-utly
played up the story on the front pages, and
: creditors began foreclosing on Nicholas. He went
Bother banks and lending institutions, but for reasons
f,could not fathom, they refused to come to his assis-The
day after he was forced into bankruptcy
tolas committed suicide.
: Demiris' sense of thekaeossini was a two-edged
3rd. Just as he never forgave an injury, neither did
ever forget a favor. A landlady who had fed and
led the young man when he was too poor to pay
suddenly found herself the owner of an apartment
(aiding, without any idea who her benefactor was. A
; girl who had taken the penniless young Demiris
}io live with her had been given a villa and a lifetime
lion anonymously. The people who had had
ttgs with the ambitious young Greek lad forty

years earlier had no idea how the casual relationship
with him would affect their lives. The dynamic young
Demiris had needed help from bankers and lawyers,
ship captains and unions, politicians and financiers.
Some had encouraged and helped him, others had
snubbed and cheated him. In his head and in his heart
the proud Greek had kept an indelible record of every
transaction. His wife Melina had once accused him of
playing God.
"Every man plays God," Demiris had told her.
"Some of us are better equipped for the role than others."
"But it is wrong to destroy the Eves of men, Costa."
"it is not wrong. It is justice."
"Vengeance*" >
"Sometimes it is the same. Most men get away with
the evil they do. I am in a position to make them pay
for it That is justice." >
He enjoyed the hours he spent devising traps for his

adversaries. He would study his victims carefully, analyzing
their personalities» assessing their strengths and
their weaknesses.
When Demiris had had three small freighters and
needed a loan to expand his fleet, he had gone 'to a
Swiss banker in Basel. The banker had not only turned
him down but had telephoned other banker friends of
his to advise them not to give the young Greek any
money. Demiris had finally managed to borrow the
money in Turkey.
Demiris had bided his time. He decided that the
banker's Achilles' heel lay in his greed. Demiris was in
negotiation with Ibn Saud of Arabia to take over leases
on a newly discovered oil development there. The
leases would be worth several hundred million dollars
to Demiris9 company.
He instructed one of his agents to leak the news to the Swiss banker about
the deal that was about to take1 place. The banker was offered a 25-percent
participa- the new company if he put up five million dol-|in
cash to buy shares of the stock. When the deal
through, the five million dollars would be worth
than fifty million. The banker quickly checked
Seal and confirmed its authenticity. Not having that
of money available personally, he quietly bor-it
from the bank without notifying anyone, for I ted no wish to share his
windfall. The transaction him to take place the following week, at which time he
id be able to replace the money he had taken,
iien Demiris had the banker's check in his hand,
'"announced to the newspapers that the arrangement
Arabia had been canceled. The stock plummeted,
was no way for the banker to cover his losses,
his embezzlement was discovered. Demiris picked
' the banker's shares of stock at a few cents on the
and then went ahead with the oil deal. The stock
The banker was convicted of embezzlement \ given a prison sentence of twenty
years.
Here were a few players in Demiris' game with
he had not yet evened the score, but he was hi
hurry. He enjoyed the anticipation, the planning
the execution. It was like a chess game, and De-was
a chess master. These days he made no ene-for
no man could afford to be his enemy, so his
was limited to those who had crossed his path
ïthe past

_>
"This, then, was the man who appeared one after-at
NoeÚe Page's Sunday salon. He was spending
hours in Paris on his way to Cairo, and a young
Jptress he was seeing suggested that they stop hi at
salon. From the moment Demiris saw Noelle, he
tew that he wanted her.
«Aside from royalty itself which was unavailable to

daughter of a Marseille fishmonger, Constantin De-was
probably the closest thing there was to a yet. Three days after she had met him Noelle quit her
play without notice, packed her clothes and joined
Constantin Demiris in Greece.

Because of the prominence of their respective positions
it was inevitable that the relationship between
Noelle Page and Constantin Demiris become an international cause célëbre. Photographers and reporters
were constantly trying to interview Demiris' wife, but if
her composure was ruffled, she never betrayed it. Melina
Demiris' only comment to the press was that her
husband had many good friends around the world and
that she saw nothing wrong with that. Privately she
told her outraged parents that Costa had had affairs
before and that this would soon wear itself out like all
the others. Her husband would leave on extended business
trips, and she would see newspaper photographs
of him with Noelle hi Constantinople or Tokyo or
Rome. Melina Demiris was a proud woman, but she
was determined to endure the humiliation because she
truly loved her husband. She accepted the fact, though
she could never fathom the reason, that some men
needed more than one woman and that even a man in
love with his wife could sleep with another woman. She
would have died before she let another man touch her.
She never reproached Constantin, because she knew
that it would serve no purpose except to alienate him.
They had on balance a good marriage. She was aware
that she was not a passionate woman, but she let her
husband use her in bed whenever he wished, and she
tried to give him what pleasure she could. If she had
known of the ways that Noelle made love to her husband,
she would have been shocked, and if she had
known how much her husband enjoyed it, she would
have been miserable.
Nqelle's chief attraction for Demiris» for whom
women no longer held any surprises, was that she was
a constant surprise. To him who had a passion for puzzles,
she was an enigma, defying solution. He had
met anyone like her. She accepted die beautiful
he gave her, but she was just as happy when he him her nothing. He bought her
a lavish villa at Potto-overlooking
the exquisite blue, horseshoe bay, but
new that it would have made no difference if it had
a tiny apartment hi the old Plaka section of
lens.
had met many women in his life who had
to use then-sex
to manipulate him in one way or
her. Noelle never asked anything of bun. Some
ten had come to him to bask in his reflected glory, him in Noelle's case she

was the one who attracted the
spapermen and photographers. She was a star in
[own right. For a while Demiris toyed with the idea
; perhaps she was in love with him for himself, but him too honest to maintain the delusion,
the beginning it was a challenge to try to reach him deep core inside Noelle, to subjugate it and make it
At first Demiris had tried to do it sexually, but for
e first time in his life, he had met a woman who was
than a match for bun. Her sensual appetites ex-his.
Anything he could do, she could do better
more often and with more skill, until finally he opened to relax hi bed and enjoy her as he had never
Dyed another woman in his life. She was a pheon,
constantly revealing new facets for him to
oy. Noelle could cook as well as any of the chefs ; whom he paid a king's ransom and knew as much
art as the curators he kept on yearly retainers to
out paintings and sculpture for him. He enjoyed
to them discussing art with Noelle and their
ement at the depth of her knowledge.
(Demiris had recently purchased a Rembrandt, and
le happened to be at his summer island when the
ating arrived. There was a young curator there who
I found the painting for him.
| "It's one of the Master's greatest," the curator had
I as he unveiled it
It was an exquisite painting of a, mother and daughter.
Noelle was seated in a chair, sipping an ouzo, quietly watching.
"It's a beauty," Demiris agreed. He turned to Noelle.
"How do you like it?"
"It's lovely," she said. She turned to the curator.
"Where did you find it?"
"I traced it to a private dealer in Brussels," he replied proudly, "and persuaded him to sell it to me."
"How much did you pay for it?" Noelle asked.
"Two hundred and fifty thousand pounds."
"It's a bargain," Demiris declared.
Noelle picked up a cigarette, and the young man rushed to light it for her. "Thank you," she said. She looked at Demiris. "It would have been more of a bargain, Costa, if he had bought it from the man who owned it"
"I don't understand," Demiris said.
The curator was looking at her oddly.
"If this is genuine," Noelle explained, "then it came from the estate of the Duke of Toledo in Spam." She turned to the curator. "Is that not so?" she asked.
His face had turned white. "I--I have no idea," he stammered. "The dealer didn't tell me."
"Oh, come now," Noelle chided him. "You mean you bought a painting for this amount of money without

establishing its provenance? That's difficult to believe. The estate priced the painting at one hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds. Someone's been cheated out of seventy-five thousand pounds."

And it had proven to be true. The curator and the art dealer were convicted of collusion and sent to prison. Demiris returned the painting. In thinking it over later he decided that he was less impressed by Noelle's knowledge than by her honesty. If she had wished to, she could simply have called the curator aside, threatened to blackmail him and split the money with him. Instead she had challenged him openly in of Demiris with no ulterior motive. He had her a very expensive emerald necklace in apn, and she had accepted it with the same appreciation with which she would have accept-j cigarette lighter. Demiris insisted on taking No-ith him everywhere. He trusted no one in busi-id therefore was forced to make all his decisions aself. He found it helpful to discuss business with Noelle. She was amazingly knowledgeable business, and the mere fact of being able to talk ' someone sometimes made it easier for Demiris to a decision. In time Noelle knew more about his Hess affairs than anyone with the possible excep-his lawyers and accountants. In the past De-had always had several mistresses at a time, but 1 Noelle gave him everything he needed, and one by »he dropped them. They accepted the conge with-dtterness, for Demiris was a generous man. him owned a yacht that was a hundred and thirty-five ; long, with four G.M. diesels. It carried a seaplane, of twenty-four, two speed boats and had a liwater swimming pool. There were twelve beautí-appointed guest suites and a large apartment fot elf, crammed with paintings and antiques.

Demiris entertained on his yacht, it was No-who was his hostess. When Demiris flew or sailed him private island, it was Noelle he took with him Melina remained at home. He was careful never his wife and Noelle together, but he knew of se that his wife was aware of her.

jJ'Noelle was treated like royalty wherever she went, then it was only her due. The little girl who had Iced out at her fleet of ships through the dirty apart-window in Marseille had moved on to the largest in the world. Noelle was not impressed by De-wealth or his reputation: She was impressed by ; intelligence and strength. He had the mind and will 1 a giant and he made other men seem pusillanimous in comparison. She sensed the Implacable cruelty in him, but somehow this made him even more exciting, for it was in her also.

Noelle constantly received offers to star in plays and

in motion pictures, but she was indifferent. She was playing the lead in her own life story, and it was more fascinating than anything any scriptwriter could concoct. She dined with kings and prime ministers and ambassadors, and they all catered to her because they knew that she had the ear of Demiris. They would drop subtle hints about what their needs were and they promised her the world if she would help them. But Noelle already had the world. She would lie in bed with Demiris and tell him what each man had asked for, and out of this information Demiris would gauge their needs and then: strengths and their weaknesses. Then he would put on appropriate pressures, and from this more money would pour into his already overflowing coffers.

Demiris' private island was one of his great joys. He had purchased an island that was raw land and had transformed it into a paradise. It had a spectacular hilltop villa in which he lived, a dozen charming guest cottages, a hunting preserve, an artificial freshwater lake, a harbor where his yacht could anchor and a landing field for his planes. The island was staffed by eighty servants, and armed guards kept out intruders. Noelle liked the solitude of the island, and she enjoyed it most when there were no other guests there. Constantin Demiris was flattered, assuming that it was because Noelle preferred to be alone with him. He would have been astonished if he had known how preoccupied she was with a man of whose existence he was not even aware.

Larry Douglas was half a world away from Noelle, fighting secret battles on secret islands, and yet she knew more about him than his wife, with whom he corresponded fairly regularly. Noelle traveled to Paris to

Barbet at least once a month and the
little detective always had an up-to-date
I ready for her.
first time Noelle had returned to France to see
and had tried to leave there had been trouble
her exit visa. She had been kept waiting in a
office for five hours and had finally been al
to place a can to Constantin Demiris. Ten mia
she had spoken to Demiris, a German officer
bed in to offer the profuse apologies of his gov-nt.
Noelle had been issued a special visa, and she
sever been stopped again.
lie little detective looked forward to Noelle's visits,
charging her a fortune, but his trained nose
even bigger money. He was very pleased with
inew liaisqn with Constantin Demiris. He had a
that in one way or another it was going to be

financial benefit to him. First he had to make
' that Demiris knew nothing of his mistress' interest
Douglas, then he had to find out how much
f< Information would be worth to Demiris. Or to No
Page for bun to keep quiet. He was on the verge of
jrmous coup, but he had to play his cards care-The
information Barbet was able to gather on
was surprisingly substantial, for Barbet could afford
to pay his sources well.
le Larry's wife was reading a letter postmarked
an anonymous, APO, Christian Barbet was report-fto
Noelle, "He's flying with the Fourteenth Fighter
up, Forty-eighth Fighter Squadron." Catherine's letter read ". . . all I can
tell you is that him somewhere in the Pacific, baby . . ."
| And Christian Barbet was telling Noelle, "They're
^Tarawa. Guam's next."
a. . . I really miss you, Cathy. Things are picking
here. I can't give you any details, but we finally him planes that are better
than the Jap Zeros . . ."
/our friend is flying P-Thirty-eights, P-Forties and
" y-ones."
"... I'm glad you've been keeping busy in Washington.
Just stay true to me, baby. every thing's fine
here. I'll have a little news for you when I see
you . . ,"
"Your friend has been awarded the D.F.C. and has
been promoted to lieutenant-Colonel."
White Catherine thought about her husband and
prayed for him to come home safely, Noelle followed
Larry's every move and she too prayed for Larry's safe
return. The war would be over soon and Larry Douglas
would be coming home. To both of diem.

CATHERINE

Washington: 1945-1946

11

? ' jl
||be morning of May 7, 1945, at Rheims, France,
many surrendered unconditionally to the Allies,
.thousand-year reign of the Third Reich had come
end Those insiders who knew of the crippling
station at Pearl Harbor, those who had watched
ark narrowly miss going into history as England's
rioo, those who had commanded the RAF and a how helpless London's defenses would have been
an all-out attack by the Luftwaffe: All these
were aware of the series of miracles that had
_tit victory to the Allies--and knew by what a awl margin it had missed going the other way. The
: of evil had almost emerged triumphant, and the
was so preposterous, so contrary to the Christian
01 Right triumphing and Evil succumbing, that
turned away from it in horror, thanking God and

their blunders from the eyes of posterity in
ins of files marked TOP SECRET. PTfae attention of the free world-turned now to the East The Japanese, those short, nearsighted comic
, were bloodily defending every inch of land they
add it looked as though it was going to be a long one costly war.
And then on August 6, an atomic bomb was
j>ed on Hiroshima. The destruction was beyond be» In a few short minutes, most of the population of a
ajor city lay dead, victims of a pestilence greater than ', combined wars and plagues of all the Middle Ages. him On August 9, three days later, a second atomic

bomb was dropped, this time on Nagasaki. The results
were even more devastating. Civilization had finally
reached it finest hour; it was able to achieve genocide
that could be calculated at the rate of x number of millions
of persons per second. It was too much for the
Japanese, and on September 2, 1945, on the battleship Missouri, General Douglas MacArthur received the
unconditional surrender of the Japanese Government.
World War air was ended.
For one long moment when the news was flashed,
the world held its breath and then let out a grateful
heartfelt cheer. Cities and hamlets around the globe
were filled with hysterical parades of people celebrating
the 'end of the war to end all wars to end all wars to
end all wars . . .
The following day, through some magic that he
would never explain to Catherine, Bill Fraser was able
to get a telephone caH through to Larry Douglas on an
island somewhere hi the South Pacific. It was to be a
surprise for Catherine. Fraser asked her to wait in her
office for him so that they could go to lunch together.
At 2:30 in the afternoon, she buzzed Bill on the intercom
system.,
"When are you going to feed me?" she demanded.
"III! be time for dinner soon."
"Sit tight," Fraser replied. "I'll be with you in a minute."
Five minutes later, he buzzed her and said, "There's
a call for you on lin$ one." <
Catherine picked up the phone. "Hello?" She heard
a crackling and a swell ,of sound like the waves of a
distant ocean. "Hello," she repeated.
A male voice said, "Mrs. Larry Douglas?"
"Yes," Catherine said, puzzled. "Who's this?"
"Just a moment, please."
Through the receiver, she heard ft high-pitched
whine. Another crackling sound and then a voice
saying "Cathy?"
sat there, her heart pounding, unable to Speak.

? Larry?" him, baby."
Larry!" She began to cry and unexpectedly hoc a body was trembling.
are
you, honey?"
dug her fingernails into her arm, trying to hurt
enough so that she could stop the hysteria that
suddenly swept over her. "I'm f--fine," she said, where are you?"
I tell you, well be cut off," he said. "I'm some-urn
the Pacific." its close enough)" She began to get control of
"Are you all right, darling?" him fine,"
him will ypu be coming home?"
ay second," he promised.
Noel's eyes flooded with tears again. "OK» let's
I our watches." him you crying?"
course I'm crying, you idiot! I'm just glad you
; see the mascara running down my face. Oh Larry
ty».." him missed you, baby," he said.
get thought of the long, lonely nights that had
into weeks and months and years without
without his arms around her, without his strong,
body next to her, without his comfort and
and love. And she said, "I've missed you,

, man's voice came on the One. Tm sorry, Colonel,
twe're going to have to disconnect."
ilonell
{ou didn't tell me you were promoted."
[was afraid it would go to your head."
3h, darling, I--"
roar of the ocean grew louder, and suddenly
was a silence and the line was dead. Catherine
a at her desk staring at the telephone. And then she
buried her head in her arms and began to cry.
Ten minutes later, Eraser's voice came over the intercom.
"I'm ready for lunch when you are, Cathy," he
said.
"I'm ready for anything now," she said joyfully.
"Give me five minutes." She smiled warmly as she
thought of what Eraser had done and how much trouble
it must have cost him. He was the dearest man she
had ever known. Next to Larry, of course.

Catherine had visualized Larry's arrival so often that
the arrival itself was almost an anticlimax. Bill Fraser
had explained to her that Larry was probably coming
home in an Air Transport Command plane or a MATS
plane and they didn't run at fixed times like commercial
scheduled airlines. You conned a ride on the first
flight you could get on--and it didn't matter too much
where the plane was headed--just so it was flying in
the right general direction.
Catherine stayed home all day waiting for Larry.
She tried to read, but she was too nervous. She sat and

listened to the news and thought about Larry returning
home to her, this time forever. By midnight, he had
still not arrived. She decided he probably would not be
home until the next day. At two in the morning, when
Catherine could keep her eyes open no longer, she
went to bed.
She was awakened by a hand on her arm and she
opened her eyes and he was standing over her, her
Larry was standing there, looking down at her, a grin
on his lean, tanned face, and in a flash Catherine, was
in his arms and all the worry and loneliness and pain
of the past four years were washed away in a cleansing
flood of joy that seemed to fill every fiber of her being.
She hugged him until she was afraid that she was going
to break his bones. She wanted to stay like this forever,
never letting him go.
"Easy, honey," Larry said finally. He pulled away
from her, a smile on his face. "It's going to look funny

newspapers. Tlyer comes home safely from the
I gets hugged to death by his wife.'"
ierine turned on the lights, every one of them,
; the room so that she could see him, study him,
him. His face had a new maturity. There were
around his eyes and mouth that had not been him before. The overall effect was to make him hand*
: than ever.
wanted to meet you," Catherine babbled, "But I
i't know where. I called the Air Corps and they wasn't give me any information at all, so I just waited
(and . . ,"
moved toward her and shut her up with a kiss,
kiss was hard and demanding. Catherine had ex-to
feel the same physical eagerness for him and
was surprised to find that this was not so. She
1 him very much and yet she would have been coo-to
just sit with him and talk, instead of making
as he so urgently wanted to do. She had subli-her
sexual feelings for so long that they were
>ly buried, and it would take time before they could
> aroused and brought to the surface again, no But Larry was giving her no time. He was throwing
his clothes and saying, "God, Cathy, you don't
how I've dreamed about this moment. I was
crazy out there. And look at you. You're even I beautiful than I remembered."
|> He ripped off his shorts and was standing there na-And
somehow it was a stranger pushing her down
the bed, and she wished that Larry would give her get to get used to his being home, to get used to his
ness again. But he was getting on top of her
bout any preliminaries, forcing himself into her and

be knew that she was not ready for him. He was tear» ; Into her, hurting her and she bit her hand to keep
crying out as he lay on top of her, making love
: a wild animal.
Her husband was home.
For the next month with Fraser's blessing Catherine stayed away from the office and she and Larry spent almost every moment together. She cooked for him all of his favorite dishes, and they listened to records and talked and talked and talked, trying to fill in the gaps of the lost years between them. At night they went to patties or to the theater and when they returned home, they made love. Her body was ready for him now and she found him as exciting a lover as always. Almost.
She did not want to admit it even to herself, but there was something indefinably changed about Larry. He was more demanding, less giving. There was still foreplay before they made love, but he did it mechanically, as though it were a duty to be disposed of before he went on to the sexual attack. And it was an attack, a savage and fierce taking, as though his body were seeking vengeance for something, meting out punishment. Each time they finished making love, Catherine felt bruised and battered, as though she had taken a beating. Perhaps, she defended him, it's just because he's been so long without a woman.
As the days passed, his lovemaking remained the same and it was that fact that finally led Catherine to look for other changes in Larry. She tried to study him dispassionately, tried to forget that this was the bus* tjaad whom she adored. She saw a tall, well-built, black-haired man with deep dark eyes and a devastatingly beautiful face. Or perhaps "beautiful" no longer applied. The lines around his mouth had added a harshness to his features. Looking at this stranger, Catherine would have thought, Here is a man who could be selfish and ruthless and cold. And yet she told herself that she was being ridiculous. This was her Larry, loving and kind and thoughtful.
She proudly introduced him to all her friends and the people she worked with, but they seemed to bore him. At parties he would wander off into a corner and spend the evening drinking. It seemed to Catherine that he made no effort to be sociable. "Why should I?" at her one evening when she tried to dis-with him. "Where the fuck were all those fat
11 was up there getting my ass shot at?"
|lew times Catherine broached the subject of what 'twas going to do with his future. She had thought would want to remain in the Air Corps, but al-!r,the first thing Larry did when he returned home
> resign his commission.
Service is for suckers. There's nowhere to go

"' he had said. him was almost like a parody of the first conversation had had with him in Hollywood. Only then,
I been joking.
erine had to discuss the problem with someone a she finally decided to talk to Bui Fraser. She told
1 what was troubling her, leaving out the more per»

it's any consolation to you," Fraser said sympa-"there are millions of women all over the
going through what you're going through now.
really very simplej Catherine. You're married to a
iget." Catherine looked at him, saying nothing.
stopped to fin his pipe and light it "You cant
expect to pick up where you left off when Larry
away four years ago, can you? That place in time
at exist any more. You've moved past it, and so him Larry. Part of what makes a marriage work is that
asband and wife have common experiences. They
together and their marriage grows. You're going one have to find a common meeting ground again."
[feel disloyal even discussing it, Bill."
Fraser smiled. "I knew you first," he reminded her.
aember?"
[remember."
l*Fm sure that Larry's feeling his way, too," Fraser
ttued. "He's been living with a thousand men for
years and now he has to get used to living with a
She smiled. "You're right about everything you said.
I suppose I just had to hear someone say it."
"Everyone's full of helpful advice about how to handle the wounded," Fraser remarked, "but there are some wounds that don't show. Sometimes they go deep." He saw the look on Catherine's face. "I don't mean anything serious," he added quickly. "I'm just talking about the horrors that any combat soldier sees. Unless a man is a complete fool, if him bound to have an enormous effect on his outlook. You see what I mean?"
Catherine nodded. "Yes." The question was: What effect had it had?

When Catherine finally went back to work, the men at the agency were overjoyed to see her. For the first three days she did almost nothing but go over campaigns and layouts for new accounts and catch up on old accounts. She worked from early in the morning until late hi the evening, trying to make up for the time she had lost, badgering copywriters and sketch artists and reassuring nervous clients. She was very good at her job and she loved it.
Larry would be waiting for Catherine when she returned to the apartment at night In die beginning she had asked what he did while she was gone, but his answers

were always vague and she finally stopped asking
him. He had put up a wall, and she did not know how
to breach it. He took offense at almost everything
Catherine said, and there were constant quarrels over
nothing. Occasionally they would dine with Fraser and
she went out of her way to make those evenings pleasant
and gay so that Fraser would not think there was
anything wrong.
But Catherine had to face the fact that something
was very wrong. She felt that it was partly her failure.
She still loved Larry. She loved the look of him and the
feel of him and the memory of him, but she knew that
tonthis way, it would destroy them both.
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> was having hutch with William Eraser.
»*s Larry?" he asked.
automatic Pavlovian response of "fine" started get to her lips and she
stopped. "He needs a job,"
le said bluntly.
leaned back and nodded. "Is he getting test» out not working?"
hesitated, not wanting to lie. "He doesn't want
just anything," she said carefully. "It would have him the right thing."
studied her, trying to assess the meaning that
Ibehind her words.
a would he like to be a pilot?"
: doesn't want to go back into the Service again."
was thinking about one of the airlines. I have a
1 who runs Pan Am. They'd be lucky to get some-s
with Larry's experience."
lerine sat there thinking about it, trying to put
: hi Larry's mind. He loved flying more than any
in the world. It would be a good job, doing what
loved to do. "It---it sounds wonderful," she said
sly. "Do you really think you could get it for
,Bffl?"
!*T1Í give it a try," he said. "Why don't you sound
' out first and see how he feels about it?"
? "I will" Catherine took his hand in hers gratefully.
lanks so much."
(«For what?" Fraser asked lightly.
|"*For always being there when I need you." him He put his hand over hers.
"It goes with the terri» ,

hen Catherine told Larry about Bill Eraser's sue-that
night, he said, "That's the best idea he
since I came home," and two days later, he had
appointment to see Carl Eastman at Pan Am head-in
Manhattan. Catherine pressed Larry's suit

for him, selected a shirt and tie and shined his shoes

until she could see her Image in them. 'till call you as soon as I can and let you know how it went." He kissed her, smiled that quick boyish grin of his and left

In many ways Larry was like a small boy, Catherine thought He could be petulant and quick-tempered and surly, but he was also loving and generous.

"My luck," sighed Catherine. "I have to be the only perfect person in the whole universe."

She had a busy schedule ahead of her, but she was unable to think of anything but Larry and his meeting. It was more than just a job. She had a feeling that her whole marriage hinged on what was going to happen. It was going to be the longest day of her life.

on

Pan American headquarters was in a modern building at Fifth Avenue and Fifty-third Street Carl Eastman's office was large and comfortably furnished, and he obviously held a position of importance.

"Come in and sit down," he greeted Larry as Larry entered the office.

Eastman was about thirty-five, a trim, lantern-jawed man with piercing hazel eyes that missed nothing. He motioned Larry to a couch, then sat on a chair across from him*

"Coffee?"

"No thanks," Larry said.

"I understand you'd like to work for us."

"If there's an opening."

"There's an opening," Eastman said, "only a thousand stick jockeys have applied for it" He shook his head ruefully. "It's incredible. The Air Corps trains thousands of bright young men to fly the most complicated pieces of machinery ever made. Then when they do their job and do it damn well, the Air Corps tells 'em to get lost They have nothing for them." He sighed. "You wouldn't believe the people who come in here all day long. Top pilots, aces like yourself. There's

job open,for every thousand applicants--and I other airlines are in exactly the same position."

; of disappointment swept over Larry. "Why e>u see me?" he asked stiffly.

reasons. Number One, because the man up-i told me to."

' felt an anger rising in him.

I don't need--"

leaned forward. "Number Two, you have a him good flying record."

," Larry said, tightly.

studied him. "You'd have to go through a program here, you know. It would be like

(back to school."
hesitated, not certain where the conversation
(leading.
"liat sounds all right," he said, cautiously,
fou'll have to take your training in New York out

_' nodded, waiting.
here are four weeks of ground school and then a with of flight training." a
ou flying DC-Fours?" asked Larry,
light. When you finish your training, well put you him as a navigator. Your
training base pay will be three 1 a month."
him had the job! The son-of-a-bitch had needled him
all the thousands of pilots who were after it But him had the job! What had
he been worried about? No
Be in the whole damned Air Corps had a better rec-l
than he did.
^ Larry grinned. "I don't mind starting as a navigator,
stman, but I'm a pilot. When does that happen?"
Eastman sighed. "The airlines are unionized. The
|lly way anyone moves up is through seniority. There
a lot of men ahead of you. Do you want to give it a

*r Larry nodded. "What have I got to lose?"
"Right," Eastman said. "I'll arrange all the format

V II

ities. Youll have to take a physical, of course. Any problems there?"
Larry pinned. "The Japanese didn't find anything
wrong with me."
"How soon can you go to work?"
"Is this afternoon too early?"
"Let's make it Monday." Eastman scribbled a name
on a card and handed it to Larry. "Here. They'll be expecting
you at nine o'clock Monday morning."
When Larry phoned Catherine to tell her the news,
there was an excitement hi his voice that Catherine had
not heard for a long time. She knew then that everything
was going to be all right.

Noelle

Athens: 1946

12

Demiris owned a fleet of airplanes for his
lal use, but his pride was a converted Hawker
ley that transported sixteen passengers hi luxuri-comfort,
had a speed of three hundred miles per
and carried a crew of four. It was a flying palace,
ulterior-had been decorated by Frederick Sawrin
1 Chagall had done the murals on the walls. Instead seats, easy chairs and
comfortable couches
sprinkled throughout the cabin. The aft compart-at

had been converted into a luxurious bedroom,
vard behind the cockpit was a modern kitchen,
never Demiris or Noelle flew on the plane, there on a chef aboard. asked
Demiris had chosen as his personal pilots a Greek
named Paul Metaxas and an English ex-RAF
liter pilot named Ian Whitestone. Metaxas was a him, amiable man with a
perpetual smile on his face
a hearty, contagious laugh. He had been a
lanic, had taught himself how to fly and had
ved with the RAF hi the Battle of Britain, where he
met Ian Whitestone. Whitestone was tall, red-tired
and painfully thin, with the diffident manner of
schoolmaster on his first day of the term at a sec-(id-rate
school for incorrigible boys. In the air White-ae
was something else again. He had the rare, natu-'. skill of a born pilot, a
feel that can never be taught
learned. Whitestone and Metaxas had flown taker
for three years against the Luftwaffe and each
1 a high regard for the other.
Noelle made frequent trips in the large plane, sometimes
on business with Detains, sometimes for pleasure.
She had gotten to know the pilots but had paid no
particular attention to them.
And then one day she overheard them reminiscing
about an experience they had had in the RAF.
From that moment on Noelle either spent some part
of each flight in the cockpit talking to the two men or
invited one of them to join her back in the cabin. She
encouraged them to talk about their war experiences
and, without ever asking a direct question, eventually
learned that Whitestone had been a liaison officer in
Larry Douglas* squadron before Douglas had left the
RAF and that Metaxas had joined the squadron too
late to meet Larry. Noelle began to concentrate on the
English pilot. Encouraged and flattered by the interest
of his boss' mistress, Whitestone talked freely about his
past life and his future ambitions. He told Noelle he
tad always been interested in electronics. His brother-in-law
in Australia had opened a small electronics firm
and wanted Whitestone to go in with him, but Whitestone
lacked the capital
"The way I live," he said to Noelle, grinning, till
never make it."
Noelle continued to visit Paris once a month to see
Christian Barbet. Barbet had established a liaison with
a private detective agency in Washington, and there
was a constant stream of reports on Larry Douglas.
Cautiously testing Noelle, the little detective had offered
to send the reports to her in Athens, but she told
him that she preferred picking them up in person. Barbet
had nodded his head slyly and said in a conspiratorial
tone, "I understand, Miss Page." So she did not want Constantin Demiris to
know about her interest in

Larry Douglas. The possibilities for blackmail staggered
Barbel's mind,
"You have been most helpful, Monsieur Barbet,"
Noelle said, "and most discreet."
He smiled unctuously. "Thank you, Miss Page. My
 him depends on discretion."
him," Noelle replied, "I know you are discreet
Constantin Demiris has never mentioned your him to me. The day he does, I will ask him to destroy
Her tone was pleasant and conversational, but
a was like a bombshell.
sieur Barbet stared at Noelle for a long,
moment, licking his lips. He scratched his
nervously and stammered, "I--I assure you,
elle, that I would n--never . . ."
I'm sure you won't," Noelle said and departed.

him the commercial plane taking her back to Greece,
lie read the confidential report in the sealed manila
slope.

ACME SECURITY AGENCY
1402 "D" Street
Washington, B.C.

Reference: #2-179-210 February 2,1946
Dear Monsieur Barbet:
One of our operatives spoke to a contact in the
personnel office at Pan Am: Subject is regarded
as a skilled combat pilot, but they question
whether he is disciplined enough to work out
satisfactorily within a large, structured organization.
Subject's personal life-style follows the same
pattern as in our previous reports. We have followed
him to the apartments of various women
whom he had picked up, where he remained for
periods of from one hour to as long as five hours,
and we presume that he is having a series of casual
sexual relations with these women. (Names
and addresses are on file if you wish them.)
In view of the Subject's new employment, it is
possible that this pattern may change. We Will follow
up on this per your request
Please find our bill enclosed
Very truly yours,
R. Ruttenberg,
Managing Supervisor

Noelle returned the report to the folder and leaned
back in her seat and closed her eyes. She visualized
Larry, restless and tormented, married to a woman he
did not love, caught in a trap baited with his own

weaknesses.
His new job with the airline might slow Noelle's plan down a bit, but she had patience. In time she would bring Larry to her. Meanwhile there were certain steps she could take to move things along.

Ian Whitestone was delighted tabe invited to lunch with Noelle Pago. In the beginning he had flattered himself that she was attracted to him, but all of their encounters had been on a pleasant but formal basis that let him know that he was an employee, and she was an untouchable. He had often puzzled over what Noelle wanted of him, for Whitestone was an intelligent man, and he had the odd feeling that their random conversations meant something more to her than they meant to him.
On this particular day Whitestone and Noelle drove to a small seaside town near Cape Sunion, where they were having lunch. Noelle was dressed in a white summer frock and sandals, with her soft blond hair blowing free, and she had never looked more beautiful. Ian Whitestone was engaged to a model hi London and while she was pretty, she could not compare to Noelle. Whitestone had never met anyone who could, and he would have envied Constantin Demiris except that Noelle always seemed more desirable to him in retrospect. When Whitestone was actually with her, he found himself slightly intimidated. Now Noelle had turned the conversation to his plans for the future, and he wondered, not for the first time, whether she was probing him* orders to find out whether he was loyal to ployer.
love my job," the pilot assured Noelle earnestly, «like to keep it until I'm too old to see where I'm

studied him a moment, aware of his suspi-Tm disappointed," she said ruefully. "I was yet that you had more ambition than that." whitestone stared at her. "I don't understand." wasn't you tell me that you'd like to have your own
him company one day?"
him recalled mentioning it to her casually, and it sur-l him that she had remembered.
'That was just a pipe dream," he replied. "It would (« lot of money."
man with your ability," Noelle said, "shouldn't I by a lack of money."
litestone sat there uneasily, not knowing what Page expected him to sayi He did like his job. him making more money than he had ever made in
Ilife, the hours were good and the work interesting.
| the other hand he was at the beck and call of an ec-billionaire who expected him to be available at
ur of the day or night. It had raised hell with his

life, and his fiancee was not happy about a he was doing, good salary or no.
been talking to a friend of mine about you,"
He said. "He likes to invest hi new companies."
voice had controlled enthusiasm, as though she
excited about what she was saying and yet was
careful not to push him too hard. Whitestone
1 his eyes and met hers, Noel's very interested in you," she said, whitestone
swallowed. "I--I don't know what to
; Page."
; don't expect you to say anything now," Noelle as
him. "I just want you to think about it."
at there a moment, thinking about it. "Does Mr. him know about this?" he
asked finally.

Noelle smiled conspiratorially. "I'm afraid Mr. Do-miris
would never approve. He doesn't like to lose employees,
especially good ones. However--" she paused
fractionally, "I think someone like you is entitled to get
everything out of life that he can. Unless of course,"
she added, "you want to go on working for someone
else the rest of your life."
"I don't," Whitestone said quickly and suddenly realized
that he had committed himself. He studied No
elle's face to see if there was any suggestion that this
could be some kind of a trap, but all he saw was a sympathetic
understanding. "Any man worth his salt would
like to have his own business," he said defensively.
"Of course," Noelle agreed. "Give it some thought,
and well talk about it again." And then she added
warningly, "It will be just between us,"
"Fair enough," Whitestone said, "and thank you. ÏÏ it works out, it will
really be exciting."
Noelle nodded. "I have a feeling that it's going to
work out"
CATHERINE
Washington-Paris: 1946

13

get o'clock on Monday morning Larry Douglas
1 to the chief pilot, Captain Hal Sakowitz, at the
|j American office at LaGuardia Airport in New
As Larry walked in the door, Sakowitz picked
transcript,of Larry's service record that he had
dying and shoved it into a desk drawer.
Sakowitz was a compact, rugged-looking
with a seamed, weather-beaten face and the
hands that Larry had ever jseen. Sakowitz was
' the real veterans, of aviation. He had started out
days of traveling air circuses, had flown single

airmail planes for the Government and had
an airline pilot for twenty years and Pan Ameri
chief pilot for the past five years.
I to have you with us, Douglas/' he said,
lad to be here," Larry replied. to to get into a plane again?" him needs a plane?" grinned Larry. "Just point me
ty*ft w^nd, and I'll take off."
owitz indicated a chair. "Sit down. I like to get wanted with you boys who come in here to take
ay job."
' laughed. "You noticed."
I don't blame any of you. You're all hotshot
.you have great combat records, you come in
(on and think 'if that schmuck Sakowitz can be Chief
they oughta make me Chairman of the Board.' him of you guys plan to stay navigators very long. It's
JB

j0t a stepping stone to pilot Wefl, that* him fine. That's
|e way it should be."
"I'm glad you fed that way," Lacry said.
"But there's one thing you have to know out front
ib all belong to a union, Douglas, and promotions are
jjictly by seniority."
"I understand."
"The only thing you might not understand Is that
feese are damn good jobs and there are more people
Burning in than there are leaving. That slows up the
flte of promotion."
"Ill take my chances," Larry replied
Sakowitz's secretary'brought in coffee and Danish
pBtries and the two men spent the next hour talking
id getting acquainted. Sakowitz's manner was friendly
0d affable, and many of his questions were seemingly
{relevant and trivial, but when Larry left to go to his
jet class, Sakowitz knew a great deal about Larry
Jtoiglas. A lew minutes after Larry bad departed, Carl
Jastman came into the office.
"How did it go?" Eastman asked.
"OK."
Eastman gave him a hard look. "What do you think,
tfc?"

"Well try him."
"I asked you what you thought"
Sakowitz shrugged. "OK. I'll tell you. My hunch is
te's a goddamn good pilot He has to be, with his war
tecord. Put him in a plane with a bunch of enemy
Sghters shooting at him, and I don't think you'll find
layone better." He hesitated.
"Go on," Eastman said.

"The thing is, there aren't a hen of a lot of enemy
lighters around Manhattan. I've known guys like
Douglas. For some reason I've never figured out, their
ires are geared for danger. They do crazy things like
(fimbrag impossible mountains or diving to the bottom
I the ocean, or whatever the hell else danger they can
tod. .When a war breaks out, they rise to the top like
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in a cup of scalding coffee." He swerved his
around and looked out the window. Eastman 1 there, saying nothing, waiting.
I have a hunch about Douglas, Carl. There's some
wrong with him. Maybe if he were captain of one
ships, flying it himself, he could make it. But I
think he's psychologically geared to take orders
an engineer, a first officer and a pilot, especially
he thinks he could outfly them all." He swung
; to face Eastman. "And the funny part is, he prob could."
you're making me nervous," Eastman said,
le, too," Sakowitz confessed. "I don't think
' He stopped, searching for the right word,
Talking to him, you get a feeling he has a stick
ate up his ass, ready to explode."
: do you want to do?"
/e're doing it Hell go to school and well keep 8 I eye on him."
maybe hell wash out," Eastman said, you don't know that breed of cat Hell come out
: one man in his class."
its prediction was accurate,
le training course consisted of four weeks of
school followed by an additional month of
training. Since the trainees were already experi-1
pilots with many years of flying behind them, the
was devised to serve two purposes: the first was him through such subjects as navigation, radio, com-tion,
map reading and instrument flying to re-the
memories of the men and pinpoint their po-weaknesses,
and the second was to familiarize him with the new equipment they would be using, him instrument flying was done in a Link Trainer, a
. mock-up of an airplane cockpit that rested on a base, enabling the pilot hi the cockpit to put
plane through any maneuver, including stalls,
spins and rolls. A black hood was put over the
»: of the cockpit so that the pilot was flying blind,
using only the instruments in front of him. The instructor
outside the Trainer fed orders to the pflot, giving
him directions for takeoffs and landings in the face of
strong wind velocity, storms, mountain ranges and every
other simulated hazard conceivable. Most inexperienced
pilots went into the Link Trainer with a feeling
of confidence, but they soon learned that the little
Trainers were much more difficult to operate than they

appeared to be. It was an eerie sensation to be alone in the tiny cockpit, all senses cut off from the outside world.

Larry was a gifted pupil. He was attentive in class and absorbed everything he was taught He did all his homework and did it well and carefully. He showed no sign of impatience, restlessness or boredom. On the contrary, he was the most eager pupil in the course and certainly the most outstanding. The only area that was new to Larry was the equipment, the DC-4. The Douglas planes were long, sleek aircraft with some equipment that had not been in existence when the war began. Larry spent hours going over every inch of the plane, studying the way it had been put together and the way it functioned. Evenings he pored over the dozens of service manuals of the plane.

Late one night after all the other trainees had left the hangar Sakowitz had come upon Larry in one of the DC-4s, lying on his back under the cockpit, examining the wiring.

"I tell you, the son-of-a-bitch is gunning for my job," Sakowitz told Carl Eastman the next morning.

"The way he's going, he may get it," Eastman grinned.

At the end of the eight weeks there was a little graduation ceremony. Catherine proudly flew to New York to be there when they presented Larry with his navigator's wings.

He tried to make light of it. "Cathy, it's just a stupid little piece of cloth they give you so you'll remember what your job is when you get into the cockpit"

no, you don't," she said. "I talked to Captain

: and he told me how good you are."

does a dumb Polack know?" Larry said,

í's go celebrate."

: night Catherine and Larry and four of Larry's

ates and their wives went to the Twenty-one

on East Fifty-second Street for dinner. The foyer

, crowded, and the maitre d' told them that without

stations there were no tables available.

To hell with this place," Larry said. "Let's go next a to Toots Shor's."

/ait a minute," Catherine said. She went over to it captain and asked to see Jerry Berns.

. few moments later a short, thin man with inquisi gray eyes bustled up.

"I'm Jerry Berns," he said. "May I help you?"

fy husband and I are with some friends," Cather-> explained. "There are ten of us."

started to shake his head. "Unless you have a ration..."

|"rm William Fraser's partner," Catherine said.

fjJerry Berns looked at Catherine reproachfully.

hy didn't you tell me? Can you give me fifteen min?"

|fThank you," Catherine said gratefully, him, She'went back to where the group was standing. a "Surprise!" Catherine said. "We have a table."
"How did you manage that?" Larry asked.
&*Tt was easy," Catherine said, "I mentioned Bill
's name." She saw the look that came into
r's eyes. "He comes hi here often," Catherine went
quickly. "And he told me if I ever came in and
1 a table, to mention his name."
^'Larry turned to the others. "Let's get the hell out of
e. This is for the birds."
no The group started toward the door. Larry turned to ierine. "Coming?"
"Of course," Catherine said hesitantly, "I just wanted to tell them that we're not..."
"Fuck "em," said Larry loudly. "Are you coming or
aren't you?"
People were turning to stare. Catherine felt her face
redden.
"Yes," she said. She turned and followed Larry out
the door.
They went to an Italian restaurant on Sixth Avenue
and had a bad dinner. Outwardly Catherine acted as
though nothing had happened, but inwardly she was
fuming. She was furious with Larry for his childish behavior
and for humiliating her in public.
When they got home, she walked into the bedroom
without saying a word, undressed, turned out the light
and got into bed. She heard Larry in the living room,
mixing a drink.
Ten minutes later he came into the bedroom and
tamed on the light and walked over to the bed. "You
planning to become a martyr?" he asked.
She sat up, furious. "Don't try to put me on the defensive,"
she said. "Your behavior tonight was inexcusable.
What got into you?"
"The same guy that got into you."
She stared at him. "What?"
"I'm talking about Mr. Perfection. Bfll Fraser."
She looked at him, not understanding. "Bill's never
done anything but help us."
"You bet your ass*" he said. "You owe him your
business. I owe him my job. Now we can't even sit
down in a restaurant without Fraser's permission. Well,
Tm sick of having him shoved down my throat every day." It was Larry's tone that shook Catherine even
more than what he was saying. It was so filled with
frustration and impotence that she realized for the first
time how tormented he must be. And why not? He had
come back from four years of fighting to find his wife
in partnership with her former lover. And to make it
worse, he himself had not even been able to get a job
without the help of Fraser.
As she looked at Larry, Catherine knew that this

; a turning point in their marriage. If she stayed
him, he would have to come first. Before her job,
everything. For the first time Catherine felt that
|really understood Larry.
though reading her mind Larry said contritely,
sorry I acted like a shit-heel this evening. But
we couldn't get a table until you mentioned
r*s magic name, I--Fd suddenly had it up to
him

*Tm sorry, Larry," Catherine said, 'Tfl never do a to you again."
ad they were in each other's arms, and Larry said, don't ever leave me,
Cathy," and Catherine but of how close she had come to it, and she held him
tighter and said, "I won't leave you, darling, ever."

i^ Larry's first assignment as a navigator was on Flight
'"'"' from Washington to Paris. He stayed over in Paris
forty-eight hours after each flight, then returned him for three days before
he flew out again.
morning Larry called Catherine at her office,
voice excited. "Hey, I've got a great restaurant for
, Can you get away for lunch?"
^Catherine looked at the pile of layouts that had to
finished and approved before noon. "Sure," she
", recklessly.
'till pick you up in fifteen minutes."
|"You're not leaving me!" Lucia, her assistant,
I. "Stuyvesant will have kittens if we don't get I'll campaign to him today."
a "ft will have to wait," Catherine said. "I'm going to
(re lunch with my husband."
Lucia shrugged. "I don't blame you. If you ever get
1 of him, will you let me know?"
^Catherine grinned. "You'll be too old."
Larry picked Catherine up in front of the office, and I got into the car.
"Did I screw up your day for you?" he asked misievously.
"Of course not."
He laughed. "All those executive types are going to
have a stroke."
Larry headed the car toward the airport
"How far is the restaurant?" Catherine asked. She
had five appointments in the afternoon, beginning at
two o'clock.
"Not far. . . Do you have a busy afternoon?"
"No," she lied.s"Nothing special."
"Good."
When they reached the airport turnoff, Larry swung
the car into the entrance.
"Is the restaurant at the airport?"
"At the other end," Larry replied. He parked the
car, took Catherine's arm and led her inside to the
Pan-Am gate. The attractive girl behind the desk
greeted Larry by name.
"This is my wife," Larry said proudly. "This is Amy

Winston."
They exchanged hellos.
"Come on." Larry took Catherine's arm and they moved toward the departure ramp.
"Larry--"Catherinebegan."Where . . . ?"
"Hey, you're the nosiest girl I've ever taken to lunch."
They had reached Gate 37. Two men behind the ticket counter were processing the tickets of emplaning passengers. A sign on the information board read:
"Flight 147 to Paris--Departing 1:00 p.m."
Larry walked up to one of the men behind the desk.
"Here she is, Tony." He handed the man a plane ticket "Cathy, this is Tony Lombardi. This is Catherine."
"I've sure heard a lot about you," the man grinned.
"Your ticket's all in order." He handed the ticket to Catherine.
Catherine stared at it dazed. "What's this for?"
"I lied to you," Larry smiled. "I'm not taking you to lunch. I'm taking you to Paris. Maxim's."
Catherine's voice broke. "M--Maxim's? la Paris?
v?" ' ^That's right"
a can't," Catherine waled. "I can't go to Paris now."
pSure you can," he grinned. "I've got your passport a my pocket."
she said, "you're mad! I have no clothes. I
: a million appointments. I--"
111 buy you some clothes in Paris. Cancel your aptments.
Eraser can get along without you for a few
»

Catherine stared at him, not knowing what to say.
remembered the resolutions she had made to her-Larry was her husband. He had to come first, ierine realized that it wasn't just taking her to Paris
was important to Larry. He was showing off for
asking her to fly in the plane he was navigating,
she had almost spoiled it. She put her hand in his
I smiled up at him.
Irwhat are we waiting for?" Catherine asked. "I'm

| Paris was a whirlwind of fun. Larry had arranged to a full week off, and it seemed to Catherine that hour of the day and night was crammed with to do. They stayed at a charming little hotel on
> Left Bank.
sir first morning in Paris Larry took Catherine to Jon on the Champs Élysées where he tried to buy the entire store for her. She bought only the things needed and was shocked at how expensive every-jwas.
|"You know your problem?" Larry said. "You worry one much about money. You're on your honeymoon."
|*ÍYes, sir," she said. But she refused to buy an eve dress that she did not need. When she tried to ask

where all the money was coming from, he did
: want to discuss it, but she finally insisted on know "I got an advance on my salary," Larry told her.
"What's the big deal?"
And Catherine had not the heart to tell him. He was like a child about money, generous and carefree, and that was part of his charm.
Just as it had been part of her father's charm.
Larry took her on the visitor's tour of Paris: to the Louvre, the Tuileries and Les Invalides to see Napoleon's Tomb. He took her to a colorful little restaurant near the Sorbonne. They went to Les Halles, the storied marketplace of Paris, and watched the fresh fruit and meat and vegetables brought in from the farms of France, and spent their last Sunday afternoon at Versailles, and then had dinner hi the breathtaking garden at the Coq Hard! outside of Paris. It was a perfect second honeymoon.

Hal Sakowitz sat in his office looking over the weekly personnel reports. In front of him was the report on Larry Douglas. Sakowitz was leaning back in his chair, studying it, pulling thoughtfully at his lower lip. Finally he leaned forward and pressed an intercom switch. "Send him in," he said.
A moment later, Larry walked in, wearing his Pan-Am uniform and carrying his flight bag. He flashed Sakowitz a smile. "Morning, Chief," he said.
"Sit down."
Larry slouched into a chair opposite the desk and lit a cigarette.
Sakowitz said, "I have a report here that last Monday in Paris you checked in for your Sight briefing forty-five minutes late."
Larry's expression changed. "I was caught in a parade on the Champs Élysées. The plane took off on time. I didn't know we were running a boy's camp here."
"We're running an airline," Sakowitz said, quietly.
"And we're running it by the book."
"OK," Larry said angrily. "Ill keep away from the

a Élysées. Anything else?" him. Captain Swift thinks you'd had a drink or two
I takeoff on the last couple of flights."
le's a goddamned liar!" Larry snapped,
by would he lie?"
he's afraid I'll take his job away." There
; a sharp anger in Larry's voice. "The son-ofa-bitch
old maid who should have been retired tea
him ago.1
Saou've

flown with four different captains,"
; said. "Which ones did you like?"
me of them," retorted Larry. He saw the trap too
Quickly, he added, "I mean--they're all right I him nothing against them,"
hey don't like flying with you either," Sakowitz
him. "You make them nervous."
at the hell does that mean?"
means that if ever there's an emergency, yon
: to be damn sure about the man in the seat next to
, They're not sure about you."
Por Christ's sake!" Larry exploded. "I lived
ugh four years of emergencies over Germany and
lie South Pacific, risking my fucking neck every
while they were back here sitting on their fat ass-allecting
big salaries, and they don't have confi->
in me? You must be joking!"
one says you're not great in a fighter plane,"
itz replied quietly. "But we're flying passengers, a a different ball game."
sat there clenching his fists, trying to control
danger. "OK," he said sullenly. "I get the message. If
through, I have a flight leaving hi a few min-omeone
else is taking it over," Sakowitz said, away fired."
a stared at him unbelievingly. "Fm what?" a way, I suppose it's my fault,
Douglas. I had have hired you in the first place."
got to his feet, his eyes blazing with fury.
"Then why the hell did you?" he demanded.
"Because your wife had a friend named Bill Fraser
. . ."Sakowitz began.
Larry moved across the desk, his fist crashing into
Sakowitz's face. The blow propelled Sakowitz against
the wall. He used the momentum to bounce up. He hit
Larry twice, then stepped back, fighting for control.
"Get out of here," he said. "Now!"
Larry stared at him, his face twisted with hatred.
"You son-of-a-bitch," he said. "I wouldn't come near
this airline again if you begged me!" He turned and
stormed out of the office.
Sakowitz stood there looking after him. His secretary
came hurrying in. She saw the overturned chair
and Sakowitz's bloody lip.
"are e you all right?" she asked.
"Terrific," he said. "Ask Mr. Eastman if he can see
me."
Ten minutes later Sakowitz had finished relating the
incident to Carl Eastman.
"What do you think's wrong with Douglas?" Eastman
asked.
"Honestly? I think he's a psycho."
Eastman regarded him with his piercing hazel eyes.
"That's pretty strong, Sak. He wasn't drunk when he
was flying. No one could even prove that he'd had a
drink on the ground. And anyone can be late once in a
while."

"they that's all it was, I wouldn't have fired him, Carl. Douglas has a low boiling point. To tell you the truth I was trying to provoke him today, and it wasn't hard. If he had stood up under the pressure, I might have taken a chance and kept him on. You know what worries me?"

"What?"

Sakowitz said, "A few days ago I ran into an old buddy who flew with Douglas in the RAF. He told me a crazy story. It seems that when Douglas was hi the Eagle Squadron he fell for a little English girl who was to a boy named Clark in Douglas* Squadron. Jas did everything he could to move in, but the wasn't having any. A week before she and dark to get married, the Squadron went up to cover him B-Seventeens in a raid over Dieppe. Douglas was at die rear of the Squadron. The fortresses their bombs and everyone headed for home. I back over the Channel^ they were hit by some and Clark was shot down." He lost in some reverie of his own. Eastman 1 for him to go on and finally Sakowitz looked up ;him. "According to my friend there were no Meshmidts anywhere near Clark when he got it."

stared at him unbelievingly. "Jesus! Are him saying that Larry Douglas . . . ?"

|iTm not saving anything. Fm just telling you an m-; story I heard." He put his handkerchief to his again. The bleeding had stopped. "It's hard to tell it's happening in the middle of a dogfight. Maybe just ran out of gas. One thing is certain. He sure Itiell ran out of luck."

"What happened to his girl?" him "Douglas moved in with her until he came back to States, then he dumped her." He looked at East-thoughtfully. "Ill tell you one thing, for sure. I [sorry for Douglas' wife."

Catherine was hi the conference room having a staff eting when the door opened and Larry walked in. His eye was bruised and swollen, his cheek was cut him hurried over to him. "Larry, what happened?"

"I quit my job," he mumbled.

Catherine took him into her office, away from the gazes of the others, and put a cold cloth to his : and his cheek. "Tell me about it," she said, holding her anger at what they had done to him.

"They've been riding me for a long time, Cathy. I they were jealous because I was in the war and weren't Anyway, today was the topper. Sakowitz

called me in and told me the only reason they hired me in the first place was because you were Bill Eraser's sweetheart"

Catherine looked at him, speechless.

-I hit him," Larry said. «I couldnt help it"
"Oh, darling!" Catherine said. "I'm so sorry."
"Sakowitz is sorrier," Larry replied. "I really clobbered him. Job or no job, I wasn't going to let anyone talk about you that way."
She held him close to her, reassuringly. "Don't worry. You can go to work for any «hike in the country."
Catherine proved to be a poor prophet. Larry applied to all the airlines and several of them gave him. interviews but nothing came of any of them. Hugh Fraser had lunch with Catherine and she told him what had happened. Fraser said-nothing,
but he was very
thoughtful all through lunch. Several times she felt he was on the verge of telling her something, but each time ho stopped. Finally he said, "I know a lot of people, Cathy. Would you like me to see what I can do for Larry somewhere else?"
"Thanks," Catherine said gratefully. "But I don't think so. Well work it out ourselves."
. Fraser regarded her a moment, then nodded. "Let me know if you change your mind."
"I will," she said appreciatively. "It seems I'm always coming to you with my problems."

ACME SECURITY AGENCY
1402 "D" Street
Washington, D.C.

Reference #2-179-210 April 1,1946
Dear Monsieur Barbet:
Thank you for your letter of March 15,1946,
and your bank draft
Since my last report, Subject has secured employment as a pilot with The Flying Wheels Trans port Company, a small independent freight company
operating out of Long Island. A Dun and Bradstreet check shows that they are capitalized under $750,000. Their equipment consists of a converted B-26 and a converted DC-3. They have bank loans in excess of $400,000. The Vice-President of the Banque de Paris in New York where they have their major account assures me that the company has an excellent growth potential and future. The bank is considering loaning them sufficient money to buy additional airplanes based on their current income of $80,000 per year with projected increases of 30% per year, over the next five years.
If you wish further details on the financial aspects of the company, please let me know.
Subject began work on March 19, 1946. The personnel manager (who is also one of the owners)

informed my operative that he felt very
fortunate to have Subject flying for him. More
details to follow.
Sincerely,
R. Ruttenberg
Managing Supervisor

Banque de Paris
New York City, New York

Philippe Chardon
President of the Board CherNelle,
To hers vraiment mauvdsef Je one sais pas Ce
que cet homme favour fait, mats quoique Ce soit, il
a payé. II a été MIS a la pone aux Flying Wheels
tie, et mon ana me dit qu'il en a pique une crise.
Je pense être a Athenes, et je compte te vair.
Mes amities a Costa--et one tien fais pas la petite
faveur que je fai faite rester a noire secret.
Áffectuesement a toi,
Philippe
ACME SECURITY AGENCY
1402 "D" Street
Washington, D.C

Reference #2-179-210 May 22,1946
Dear Monsieur Barbel:
This is a follow-up to my report of May 1,1946.
On May 14, 1946, Subject was fired by The
Flying Wheels Transport Company. I have tried
to make discreet inquiries as to the reason, but
each time have run up against a brick wall. No
one there will discuss it, I can only assume that
the Subject did something to disgrace himself,
and they don't want to talk about it.
Subject is looking for another flying job, but
apparently has no immediate prospects.
I will continue to try to get more information
about why he was discharged.
Sincerely,
R. Ruttenberg
Managing Supervisor

CABLEGRAM May 29, 1946
Christian Barbel
Cable Chrisbar
Paris, France
CABLE ACKNOWLEDGED STOP WILL IMMEDIATELY
DROP INVESTIGATION OF
REASON FOR SUBJECT BEING" FIRED
STOP WILL CONTINUE EVERYTHING ELSE
AS BEFORE
REGARDS,

R. RUTTENBERG
ACME SECURITY AGENCY

ACME SECURITY AGENCY
1402 "D" Street
Washington, D.C.
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The Otter Side of Midnight

a Reference #2-179-210 June 16, 1946
Dear Monsieur Barbet:
Thank you for your letter of June 10th and your bank draft.
On June 15th, Subject obtained employment as a co-pilot with Global Airways, a regional feeder airline operating between Washington, Boston and Philadelphia.
Global Airways is a small new airline with a fleet of three converted war planes, and as far as I have been able to ascertain, they are under» capitalized and in debt. A Vice-President of the firm informed me that they have been promised a loan from the Dallas First National Bank within the next sixty days which will give them enough capital to consolidate their bills and to expand.
Subject is held in high esteem and appears to have a good future there.
Please let me know whether you require any further information about Global Airways.
Sincerely,
R. Ruttenberg,
Managing Supervisor

ACME SECURITY AGENCY
1402 "D" Street
Washington, D.G

Reference #2-179-210 July 20, 1946

Dear Monsieur Barbet:
Global Airways has unexpectedly filed for bankruptcy and is going out of operation. As far as I can learn, this move was forced by the refusal of the Dallas First National Bank to grant the loan that was promised. Subject is now unemployed again and back to earlier patterns of behavior, as outlined hi previous reports.
I will not pursue any investigation into the tea

son for the bank's refusal of the loan or Global Airways' financial difficulties unless you specifically advise me to do so.

Sincerely,
R. Ruttenberg
Managing Supervisor

Noelle kept all the reports and the clippings in a special leather bag to which she had the only key. The bag was kept inside a locked suitcase and stored at the back of her bedroom closet, not because she thought Demiris would pry into her things, but because she knew how much he loved intrigue. This was Noelle's personal vendetta, and she wanted to be sure that Demiris remained unaware of it.
Constantin Demiris was going to play a part in her plan of vengeance, but he would never know about it
Noelle took a last look at the memorandum and locked it away, satisfied.
She was ready to begin.

It started with a phone caïï.
Catherine and Larry were having an uneasy sflence-filled dinner at home. Larry had been home very little ktely, and when he was home he was surly and rude.
Catherine understood his unhappiness.
"It's as though some demon is on my back," he had told her when Global Airways had gone bankrupt. And it was true. He had had an incredible run of bad luck.
Catherine tried to reassure Larry, to keep reminding him of what a wonderful pilot he was and how lucky anyone would be to have him. But it was like living with a wounded lion. Catherine never knew when he would lash out at her, and because she was afraid of letting him down, she tried to understand his wild rages and overlook them. The phone rang as she was serving dessert. She picked up the receiver.
"Hello."
There was an Englishman's voice on the other end

fine and it said, "Is Larry Douglas in, please?
IWhitestone here."
Just a moment." She held the receiver out to Larry. \ for you. Ian Whitestone." him frowned, puzzled. "Who?" Then his face cleared.
Christ's sake!" He walked over and took the re-from Catherine. "Ian?v He gave a short laugh.
God, it's been almost seven years. How the hell
[you ever track me down?"
Catherine watched Larry nodding and smiling as he him. At the end of what seemed like five minutes,
"Well, that sounds interesting, old buddy. Sure him. Where?" He listened. "Right. Half an hour, in
|you then." Thoughtfully, he replaced the receiver. him he a friend of yours?" Catherine asked.

turned to face her. "No, not really. That's
it's so funny. He's a guy I flew with hi the RAF. We
really got along all that well. But he says he has
sition for me." that kind of proposition?" Catherine asked.
shrugged. "Ill let you know when I get

was almost three o'clock hi the morning when
returned to the apartment. Catherine was sitting
in bed reading. Larry appeared at the bedroom

I'm*
omething had happened to him. He radiated an ex-tit
that Catherine had not seen in him for a long
. He walked over to the bed.
."How did your meeting go?"
I "I think it went great," Larry said, carefully, "In fact
'went so great I still can't believe it I think I may
>ajob."
^"Working for Ian Whitestone?"
; "No. lan's a pilot--like me. I told you we flew toiler."
i"Yes.M
"Wdl--after the war, a Greek buddy of his got him
a job as a private pilot for Demiris."
"The shipping tycoon?"
"Shipping, oil, gold--Demiris owns half the world.
WMtestone had a beautiful setup over there."
"What happened?"
Larry looked at her and grinned. "Whitestone's quit
his job. He's going to Australia. Someone's setting him
up in his own business over there."
"I still don't understand," said Catherine. "What
does all this have to do with you?"
"WMtestone spoke to Demiris about my taking his
place. He just quit, and Demiris hasn't had a chance to
look around for a replacement. Whitestone thinks I'm
a cinch for the job." He hesitated. "You don't know
what this could mean, Cathy."
Catherine thought of the other times, the other jobs,
and she remembered her father and his empty dreams,
and she kept her voice noncommittal, not wishing to
encourage any false hopes in Larry, and yet not wanting
to dampen his enthusiasm.
"Didn't you say you and Whitestone weren't particularly
good friends?"
He hesitated. "Yeah." A small frown creased his
forehead. The truth of the matter was that he and Ian
Whitestone had never liked each other at all. The telephone
call tonight had been a big surprise. At the
meeting, Whitestone had seemed oddly ill at ease.
When he had explained the situation and Larry had
said, "Fm surprised that you thought of me," there had
been an awkward pause, and then Whitestone had said,
"Demiris wants a great pilot, and that's what you are."

It was almost as though Whitestone were pressing the
job on him and that Larry would be doing him a favor.
He had appeared very relieved when Larry said he was
interested and then seemed anxious to leave. All in all
it had been a strange meeting.
"This could be the chance of a lifetime," Larry told
Cathy. "Demiris was paying Whitestone fifteen thou- drachmas a month. That's
five hundred dollars \ he lived like a king over there."
Jut wouldn't that mean you'd be living in Greece?" "We?d be living in
Greece," Larry corrected her.
Sth that kind of money, we could save enough to be
endent hi a year. I've got to take a shot at it." Catherine was hesitant,
choosing her words care-"Larry,
it's so far away and you don't even know

istantin Demiris. There must be a flying job here
»

io!" IDs tone was savage. "Nobody gives a shit
how good a pilot you are. All they care about is
long you've paid your goddam union dues. Over
I'd be independent. It's the kind of thing I've
dreaming of, Cathy. Demiris has a fleet of planes
wouldn't believe, and 111 be flying again, baby.
: only one I'd have to please would be Demiris, and
stone says he'll love me."
| She thought again of Larry's job at Pan Am and the
he had had for it and his failures with the small does. My God, she thought.
What am I getting my into? It would mean giving up the business she had
It, going to live in a strange place with strangers, him a husband who was
almost a stranger. no He was watching her. "Are you with me?"
She looked up at his eager face. This was her hus-ad
and if she wanted to keep her marriage, she I'll have to live where he lived.
And how lovely it I'll be if it did work out. He would be the old Larry
an. The charming, amusing, wonderful man she had
arried. She had to give it a chance.
"Of course I'm with you," Catherine said. "Why wasn't you fly over and see
Demiris? If the job works
, then I'll come over and join you."
He smiled, that charming, boyish grin. "I knew I I'll count on you, baby." He
put his arms around her
held her close. "You'd better take off that night-a,"
Larry said, "or I'm going to poke holes in it."
But as Catherine slowly took it off, she was thinking

about how she was going to tell Bill Fraser.

Early the next morning Larry flew to Athens to meet

Constantin Demiris.

Daring the next few days Catherine heard nothing from her husband. As the week dragged by, she found herself hoping that things had not worked out in Greece and that Larry would be coming home. Even if he got the position with Demiris, there was no way of telling how long it would last Surely he could find a job in the United States.

Six days after Larry had left, Catherine received an overseas phone calL

"Catherine?"

"Hello, darling."

"Get packed. You're talking to Constantin Demiris' new personal pilot."

Ten days later, Catherine was on her way to Greece.

íl

Book Two

Noelle AND
CATHERINE
Athens 1946

14

a mold some cities, some cities mold men. Athens is nvfl that has withstood the hammer of centuries. It captured and despoiled by the Saracens, the the Turks, but each time it patiently survived, lies toward the southern end of the great cen-plain of Attica, which slopes gently toward the iic Gulf on the southwest and is overlooked on feast by the majestic Mount Hymettus. Underneath ay patina of the city one still found a village with ancient ghosts and steeped in rich tradition aeless glories, where its citizens lived as much in past as in the present, a city of constant surprise, I of discovery, and in the end unknowable.

was at the Hellenikon Airport to meet Gather-i plane. She saw him hurrying toward the ramp, his
> eager and excited as he ran toward her. He looked her and leaner than when she had last seen him,
1 he seemed to be free of strain.
I've missed you, Cathy," he said as he scooped her cin his arms.

js*Tve missed you too." And as she said it, she real-how
much she meant it. She kept forgetting the
; physical impact that Larry had on her until they
: after an absence and each time it hit her anew.
"How did Bill Fraser take the newt?" Larry asked as him helped her through Customs.
"He was very good about it"
"He had no choice, had he?" Larry said, sardonj,
cally.
Catherine remembered her meeting with Bill Fraser.
He had looked at her, shocked. "You're going to go off
to Greece to Uve? Why, for God's sakes?"
"It's hi the fine print of my marriage contract," she
had replied lightly.
"I mean, why can't Larry get a job here, Catherine?"
"I don't know why, Bill. Something always seems to
go wrong. But he has a job hi Greece and he seems to
feel that it's going to work out."
After his first impulsive protest Fraser had been
wonderful. He had made everything easy for her and
insisted that she keep her interest hi the firm. "You're
not going to stay away forever," he kept saying.
Catherine was thinking of his words now as she
watched Larry arrange for a porter to carry her luggage
to a limousine.
He spoke to the porter in Greek and Catherine marveled
at Larry's facility for language.
"WattTl you meet Constantin Demiris," Larry said.
"He's like a goddamn king. All the moguls hi Europe
seem to spend their time figuring out 'what they can do
to please him."
I'm glad you like him.1*
"And he likes me."
She had never heard him sound so happy and enthusiastic.
It was a good omen.
On the way to the hotel Larry described his first
meeting with Demiris. Larry had been met at the airport
by a liveried chauffeur. Larry had asked to take a
look at Demiris' fleet of planes, and the chauffeur had
driven him to an enormous hangar at the far end of the
field. There were three planes, and Larry inspected
each one with a critical eye. The Hawker Siddeley was
a beauty, and he longed to get behind the wheel and fly
it. The next ship was a six-place Piper in topnotch condition.
He estimated that it could easily do three hun-

les per hour. The third plane was a two-seater
L-5, with a Lycomlng engine, a wonderful
I for shorter flights. It was an impressive private
|When Larry had finished Ms inspection, lie re-t
the watching chauffeur.
I do," Larry said "Lef him go."

: chauffeur had driven him to a villa in Varldza,
live suburb twenty-five kilometers from

wouldn't believe Demiris* place," Larry told one.
a did it look like?" Catherine asked, eagerly, it is impossible to describe. It's about ten acres with
gates, guards, watchdogs, and the whole bit
Nmtside of the viHa is a palace, and the inside is a
It has an indoor swimming pool, a full stage him projection room. You'll see ft one day."
ifas he nice?" Catherine asked.
|fou bet he was," Larry smiled. "I got the red-cartment.
I guess my reputation preceded me."
fact Larry had sat in a small anteroom for three
waiting to see Constantin Demiris. In ordinary
aces Larry would have been furious at the
but he knew how much depended on this meet
-and he was too nervous to be angry. He had told
tie how important this job was to him. But he
E not told her how desperately he needed it His one
skill was flying and without it he felt lost. It was
dough his life had sunk to some unexplored emo-1
depth and the pressures on him were" too great to get. Everything depended on this job.
the end of three hours a butler had come in and
need that Mr. Demiris was ready to see him. He
led Larry through a large reception hall that
like it belonged at Versailles. The walls were
ite shades of gold, green and blue, and Beauvais
stries hung on the walls, framed by panels of rose
A magnificent oval Savonnerie rug was on the
and above it an enormous chandelier of crystal
De Roche and bronze Dote.
At the entry to the library were a pair of green onyx
columns with capitals of gold bronze. him library itself
was exquisite, designed by a master artisan, and the
walls were carved, paneled fruitwoods. In the center of
one wall stood a white marble mantelpiece with gold
gilt ornamentations. On it rested two beautiful bronze
Chénets of Philippe Caffieri.
From mantel top to ceiling rose a heavily carved trueau
mirror with a painting by lean Honoré Frag» nard. Through an open French window Larry caught
a glimpse of an enormous patio overlooking a private
park filled with statues and fountains.
At the far end of the library was a great Bureau Plat
desk and behind it a. magnificent tall back chair covered
hi Aubusson tapestry. In front of the desk were
two bergeres with Gobelin upholstery.
Demiris was standing near the desk, studying a large
Mercator map on the wall, dotted with dozens of colored
phis. He turned as Larry entered and held out his
hand.

"Constantin Demiris," he said, with the faintest
trace of an accent Larry had seen photographs of him
hi news magazines throughout the years, but nothing
had prepared him for the vital force of the man.
MI know," Larry said, shaking his hand. "I'm Larry
Douglas."
Demiris saw Larry's eyes go to the map on the wall
"My empire," he said. "Sit down."
Larry took a chair opposite the desk.
"I understand that you and Ian Whitestone flew together
in the RAF?"
"Yes."
Demiris leaned back hi his chair and studied Larry.
"Ian thinks very highly of you."
Larry smiled, "I think highly of him. He's a hell of a
pilot."
"That's what he said about you, except he used the
word 'great.'"
felt again that sense of surprise he had had him had first spelled oat the
offer. He had
given Demiris a big buildup about him, far
proportion to the relationship that he and emerging had had. "I'm good,"
Larry said. "That's
ness."
him nodded. "asked like men who are good at their
Did you know that most of the people in the
I are not?"
i.hadn't given it much thought one way or the
' Larry confessed.
have." He gave Larry a wintry smile. "That*s my pie. The great majority of
people hate
r*re doing, Mr. Douglas. Instead of devising
get into something they like, they remain
. all then* lives, like brainless bisects. It's rare to Ba man who loves his
work. Almost invariably him you find such a man, he is a success." one suppose
that's true," Larry said modestly, you are not a success."
looked up at Demiris, suddenly wary. That
ads on what you mean by success, Mr. Demiris,"
>id carefully.
at I mean is," Demiris said bluntly, "you did
hi the war, but you are not doing very well Ce."
felt the muscles of his jaw begin to tighten. He
: he was being baited, and he tried to hold back
His mind raced frantically, trying to figure
|what he could say to salvage this job he needed so
erately. Demiris was watching him, his olive black him quietly studying him,
missing nothing.
at happened to your job with Pan American,
, Douglas?"
found a grin he didn't feel like. "I didn't like
' idea of sitting around for fifteen years waiting to get a copilot."
> you hit the man you worked for." a showed his surprise. "Who told you
that?"

"Qh, come, Mr, Douglas," Demiris said impatiently, "if you went to work for me, I would be putting my life in your hands every time I flew with you. My life hap. pens to be worth a great deal to me. Did you really think I would hire you without knowing everything about you?"

"You were fired from two flying jobs after you were fired from Pan Am," Demiris went on. "That's a poor record."

"It had nothing to do with my ability," Larry retorted, anger beginning to rise in him again. "Business was slow with one company, and the other couldn't get a bank loan and went bankrupt. I'm a damned good pilot."

Demiris studied him a moment, then smiled. "I know you are," he said. "You don't respond well to discipline, do you?"

"I don't like being given orders by idiots who know less than I do."

"I trust I will not fall into that category," Demiris said dryly.

"Not unless you're planning to tell me how to fly your planes, Mr. Demiris."

"No, that would be your job. It would afco be your job to see that I got where I was going efficiently, comfortably and safely."

Larry nodded. "I'd do my best, Mr. Demiris."

"I believe that," Demiris said. "You've been out to look at my planes."

Larry tried to keep the surprise out of his face.

«Yes, sir."

"How did you like them?"

Larry could not conceal his enthusiasm. "They're beauties."

Demiris responded to the look on Larry's face.

"Have you ever flown a Hawker Siddeley?"

Larry hesitated a moment, tempted to lie. "No, sir."

Demiris nodded. "Think you could learn?"

grinned. "they you've got someone who can

»ten minutes."

leaned forward in his chair and pressed his slender fingers together. "I could choose a pilot

»is familiar with all my planes."

you won't," Larry said, "because you'll keep new planes, and you want someone who can

apt to anything you buy."

liDemiris nodded his head. "You are correct," he

"What I am looking for is a pilot--a pure pilot-- a who is at his happiest when he is flying." on That was the moment when Larry knew the job was

fc

him Larry was never aware of how close he had come to being hired. A great deal of Constantin Demiris' I was due to a highly developed instinct for trou-and

it had served him often enough so that he sel-disregarded it. When Ian Whitestone had come to

orm him that he was quitting, a silent alarm went off him Demiris' mind. It was partly because of Whitestone's
tier. He was acting unnaturally and seemed uneasy.
: wasn't a question of money, he assured Demiris. He
a chance to go into business for himself with his
other-in-law in Sydney and he had to try it. Then he
1 recommended another pilot.
"He's an American, but we flew together hi the
He's not just good, he's great, Mr. Demiris. I had know a better flyer."
Demiris quietly listened as Ian Whitestone went on
ailing the virtue of his friend, trying to find the
note that jarred him. He finally recognized it
litestone was overselling, but possibly that was be-ause
of his embarrassment at quitting his job so
Tjrupfly.
Because Demiris was a man who left not even the
lest detail to chance, be made several phone calls
various countries after Whitestone left. Before the
noon was over Demiris had ascertained that some one had indeed put up money to finance Whitestone in
a small electronics business in Australia, with his
brother-in-law. He had spoken to a friend in the British
Air Ministry and two hours later had been given a
verbal report on Larry Douglas. "He was a bit erratic
on the ground," his friend had said, "but he was a superb
flyer." Demiris had then made telephone calls to
Washington and New York and had been quickly
brought up-to-date on Larry Douglas* current status.
Everything on the surface appeared to be just as it
ought to be. And yet Constantin Demiris still felt that
vague sense of unease, a presentiment of trouble. He
had discussed the matter with Noelle, suggesting that
perhaps he might offer Ian Whitestone more money to
stay on. Noelle had listened attentively and then said,
"No. Let him go, Costa. And if he recommends this
American flyer so highly, then I would certainly try
him."
And that finally had decided him.

From the moment Noelle knew that Larry Douglas
was on his way to Athens she was able to think of
nothing else. She thought of all the years it bad taken,
the careful, patient laying of plans, the slow, inexorable
tightening of the web, and she*was sure that Constantin
Demiris would have been proud of her if he had
known. It was ironic, Noelle reflected. If she had never
met Larry, she could have been happy with Demiris.
They complemented e!ach other perfectly. They b,oth
loved power and knew how to use it. They were above
ordinary people. They were gods, meant to rule. In the
end they could never lose, because they had a deep, almost
mystic patience. They could wait forever. And
now, for Noelle, the waiting was over.

Noelle spent the day in the garden lying hi a hammock,
going over her plan; and by the time the sun began
to sink toward the western sky, she was satisfied.

y»fshe thought, it was a pity that so much of the
years had been filled with her plans for ven-It
had motivated almost every waking mo-given
her life a vitality and drive and excite-and
now in a few short weeks the quest would on come to an end. '
that moment, lying under the dying Grecian sun
the late afternoon breezes beginning to cool the
green garden, Noelle had no idea that it was just

him night before Larry was to arrive, Noelle was unto
sleep. She lay awake all night, remembering
and the man who had given her the gift of laugh-;and
taken it away from her again . . . feeling
jr's baby in her womb, possessing her body as its
jwr had possessed her mind. She remembered that
in the dreary Paris flat and the agony of the
. metal coat hanger ripping into her flesh deeper
deeper until it tore into the baby with the sweet,
arable pain driving her into a frenzy of hysteria
the endless river of blood pouring from her. She
abered all these things and relived them again
, the pain, the agony and the hatred...
U five and., Noelle was up and dressed, sitting in
room looking out at the huge fireball rising over
Aegean. It reminded her of another morning in
is when she had arisen early and dressed and wanted for Larry--only this time
he would be here. Be*
she had seen to it that he had to be. As Noelle
him before, so Larry needed her now, even
ough he was still unaware of it.
Demiris sent a message up to Noelle's suite that he
ould like her to have breakfast with him, but she was
excited, and she was afraid that her mood might him his curiosity. She had
long ago learned that De-had
the sensitivity of a cat: He missed nothing.
Noelle reminded herself that she must be care-She
wanted to take care of Larry herself in her

own way. She had thought long and hard about the
fact that she was vising Constantin Demiris as an UN,
witting tool. they he ever found out, he would not like it.
Noelle had a demitasse of thick Greek coffee and
half a freshly baked roll. She had no appetite. Her
mind was feverishly dwelling on the meeting that
would take place hi a few short hours. She had taken
unusual care with her makeup and the selection of a
dress, and she knew that she looked beautiful.
Shortly after eleven o'clock, Noelle heard the limousine

pull up in front of the house. She took a deep
breath to control her nervousness, then slowly walked
over to the window. Larry Douglas was getting out of
the car. Noelle watched as he moved toward the front
door and it was as though the march of years had
rolled away, and the two of them were back in Paris.
Larry was a little more mature, and the fighting and
the Jiving had added new lines to his face, but they
only served to make him handsomer than he had been.
Looking at him through the window ten yards away
Noelle could still feel the animal magnetism, still feel
the old desire and it welled up hi her, mixing with the
hatred until she was filled with a sense of exhilaration
that was almost like a climax. She took one last quick
look at herself hi the mirror and then went downstairs
to meet the man she was about to destroy.
As she walked down the stairs, Noelle wondered
what Larry's reaction would be when he saw her. Had
he bragged to his friends and perhaps even his wife
that Noelle Page had once been in love with him? She
wondered, as she had wondered a hundred times before,
whether he ever relived the magic of those days
and nights they had together in Paris and whether he
regretted what he had done to her. How it must have eaten at his soul that
Noelle had become internationally
famous and that his own life consisted of a series
of small failures! Noelle wanted to see some of that in
Larry's eyes notf when they came face to face for the
first time in almost seven years.
lie had reached the reception hall when the front opened and the butler
ushered him in. Larry was
at the enormous foyer in awe when he turned
Noelle. He looked at her for a long moment,
lighting up in appreciation at the sight of a
woman. "Hello," he said, politely. I'm Larry him. I have an appointment to
see Mr. Demiris."
ad there was no sign of recognition on his face,
sat all.

living through the streets of Athens toward then*
Catherine was dazed by the succession of ruins
^monuments that appeared all around them.
head she saw the breathtaking spectacle of the
Htnarbled Parthenon rising high atop the Acropo-;
Hotels and office buildings were everywhere, yet in
| «odd way it seemed to Catherine that the newer
appeared temporary and impermanent while
Parthenon loomed immortal and timeless in the
I clarity of the air.
"Impressive, isn't it?" Larry grinned. "The whole a is like that. One big
beautiful ruin."
jííhey passed a large park in the center of the city
dancing fountains in the middle. Hundreds of ta-with

green and orange poles lined the park, and him air above them was carpeted with blue awnings.
"That's Constipation Square," Larry said. "What?" ' "Its real name is Constitution Square. People sit at
him tables all day drinking Greek coffee and watching I world go by."
On almost every block there were outdoor cafes,
on the corners men were selling freshly caught
ages. Everywhere flowers were sold by vendors,
their booths were a rage of violently colored blos-'The
city is so white," Catherine said. "It's dazng."
The hotel suite was large and charming, overlooking
Syntagma Square, the large square in the center of the
city. In the room were beautiful flowers and an enormous
bowl of fresh fruit.
"I love it, darling," Catherine said, going around the
suite.
The bellboy had put her suitcases down and Larry
tipped him. "Parapolee," the boy said.
"Paraktdo," Larry replied.
The bellboy left, closing the door behind him.
Larry walked over and put his arms around Catherine.
"Welcome to Greece." He kissed her hungrily, and
she felt the hardness of his body pressing into the
softness of hers and she knew how much he had missed
her and she was glad. He led her into the bedroom.
On the dressing table was a small package. "Open
it," Larry told her.
Her fingers tore the wrapping apart and in a small
box inside was a tiny bird carved in jade. As busy as he
was, Larry had remembered, and Catherine was
touched. Somehow the bird was a talisman, an omen
that everything was going to be all right, that the problems
of the past were finished.
As they made love, Catherine said a little prayer of
gratitude, thankful to be hi the arms of the husband
whom she loved so much, in one of the most exciting
cities in the world, starting out on a new life. This was
the old Larry, and all their problems had only made
their marriage stronger.
Nothing could hurt them now.

The next morning Larry arranged for a real-estate
agent to show Catherine some apartments. The agent
turned out to be a short, dark, heavily moustached man
named Dimitropolous who spoke in a rapid tongue that
he sincerely believed was perfect English but which
consisted of Greek words interlaced with an occasional
undecipherable English phrase.
By throwing herself on his mercy--a trick that
Catherine was to use often in the months to come--she

him to speak very slowly so that she was
sift out some of the English words and try to
(a wild stab at what he was trying to say.
fourth place he showed her was a bright and
four-room apartment hi what she later learned
pthe Kolonaki section, the fashionable suburb of
lined with beautiful residential buildings and
: shops.
Larry returned to the hotel that evening!
told him about the apartment, and two days
they moved in.

was away during-the
day but he tried to be him to have dinner with Catherine. Dinner in Athens
any time between nine and twelve o'clock. Be-two
and five hi the afternoon, everyone had a
and the shops opened again until late evening.
Ëterine found herself completely absorbed in the
On her third night in Athens Larry brought home
ad, Count George Pappas, an attractive Greek
forty-five, tall and slim with dark hair with a
of gray at the temples. There was a curious old-aed
dignity about him that Catherine liked. He
: them to dinner at a small taverna hi the Plaka, the
at section of the city. The Plaka comprised a few
acres carelessly flung together in the heart of
itown Athens, with twisting alleys and crumbling,
staircases that led to tiny houses built un-Turkish
rule when Athens was a mere village. The
. was a place of whitewashed, rambling structures,
fruit and flower stalls, the marvelous aroma of I roasting hi the open,
howling cats and vociferous
fights. The effect was enchanting. In any other him, Catherine thought, a
section like this would be the
, Here, if him a monument.
(The taverna that Count Pappas took them to was
on top of a roof overlooking the city; the him were dressed in colorful
costumes.

'Mi
tfl

"What would you like to «at?" the Count asked
Catherine.
She studied the alien menu helplessly. "Would you
mind ordering for me? I'm afraid I might order the

proprietor."
Count Pappas ordered a sumptuous banquet, choosing a variety of dishes so Catherine would get a chance to taste everything. They had dolmades, meatballs wrapped in vine leaves; mousaka, a succulent meat and eggplant pie; stiffado, stewed hare with onions-- Catherine wasn't told what it was until she had eaten half of it, and she was unable to eat another bite of it--and taramosalata, the Greek salad of caviar with olive oil and lemon. The Count ordered a bottle of retsina.
This is our national wine," he explained. He watched Catherine with amusement as she tasted it. It had a piney, resonated taste, and Catherine struggled gamely to down it
"Whatever I had," she gasped, "I think this just cured it."
As they ate, three musicians began to play Bozoukia music. It was lively and gay and infectious and, as the group watched, customers began to get to their feet and move out onto the dance floor to dance to the music. What amazed Catherine was that the dancers were all male, and they «ere magnificent She was enjoying herself tremendously.
They did not leave the cafe until after three and. The Count drove them back to their new apartment.
"Have you done any sightseeing yet?" he asked Catherine.
«Not really," she confessed. "I'm waiting for Larry to get some time off."
The Count turned to Larry. "Perhaps I could show Catherine some of the sights until you are able to join

"That would be great," Larry said. "they you're sure it wouldn't be too much trouble."

would be my pleasure," the Count replied He to Catherine. "Would you mind having me as iguider
looked at him and thought of Dimitropolous, the (real-estate man who spoke fluent gibberish.
I'd love it," she replied sincerely.
him
next few weeks were fascinating. Catherine spend mornings fixing up the apartment, and in (afternoon, if Larry was away, the Count would 'on her up and take her sightseeing, they drove out to Olympia. 'This is the site of the on Olympic Games," the Count told her. "They were here every year for a thousand years in spite of , plagues and famines."
ierine stood looking in awe at the ruins of the arena, thinking of the grandeur of the contests had been held there through the centuries, the

phs, the defeats.
Talk about the playing fields of Eton," Catherine "This is where the spirit of sportsmanship really
.isn't it?"
lie Count laughed. "I'm afraid not," he said. "The I'll is a little embarrassing."
get looked up, interested. "Why?"
lie first chariot race ever held here was fixed."
|*Fixed?"
Tm afraid so," Count Pappas confessed. "You see,
: was a rich prince named Pelops who was feuding
a rival. They decided to hold a chariot race here
[see who was the better man. The night before the
Pelops tampered with the wheel of his rival's
When the race began, the whole countryside a here to cheer on their favorite. At the first turn the
of the rival's chariot flew off, and his chariot
Pelop's rival was entangled in the reins and
1 to his death. Pelops drove on to victory."
i*That's terrible," Catherine said. "What did they do
Iton?"
That's really the disgraceful part of the story," the Count replied. "By now the whole populace was aware of what Pelops had done. It made him such a big hero that a huge pediment was raised hi his honor at Olympiad Temple of Zeus. It is still there." He smiled wryly. "I'm afraid that our villain prospered and lived happily ever after. As a matter of fact," he added, "the whole region south of Corinth is called the Peloponnesus after him."
"Who said crime doesn't pay?" marveled Catherine.
Whenever Larry was free, he and Catherine would explore the city together. They found wonderful shops where they would spend hours haggling over prices, and out-of-the-way little restaurants that they made their own. Larry was a gay and charming companion, and Catherine was grateful that she had given up her job in the States to be with her husband.

Larry Douglas had never been happier in his life. The job with Demiris was the dream of a lifetime. The money was good, but Larry was not interested In that He was interested only in the magnificent machines he flew. It took him exactly one hour to learn to fly the Hawker Siddeley and five more flights to master it. Most of the time Larry flew with Paul Metaxas, Demiris' happy-go-lucky little Greek copilot. Metaxas had been surprised by the sudden departure of Ian Whitestone, and be had been apprehensive about Whitestone's replacement. He had heard stories about Larry Douglas, and he was not sure he liked what he heard. Douglas, however, seemed genuinely enthusiastic about his new job and the first time Metaxas flew

with him, he knew that Douglas was a superb pilot.
Little by little Metaxas relaxed his guard and the
two men became friends.
Whenever he was not flying, Larry spent time learning
every idiosyncrasy of Demiris' fleet of planes. Before
he was through, he was able to fly them all better
than anyone had ever Sown them before.
him variety in his job fascinated Larry. He would fly
, of Demiris' staff on business trips to Brindisi
[Corfu and Rome, or pick up guests and fly them to
ris' island for a party or to his chalet in Switzer-!
for skiing. He became used to flying people whose
pbs he was constantly seeing on die front
of newspapers and magazines, and he would re-Catherine
with stories about them. He flew the
it of a Balkan country, a British prime minister,
oil chieftain and his entire harem. He flew
singers and a ballet company and the cast of a
ay play that was staging a single performance
^London for Demiris' birthday. He piloted Justices
Supreme Court, a congressman and a former
adent of the United States. During the flights Larry
; most of the time in the cockpit, but from time to
he would wander back to the cabin to make sure passengers were comfortable.
Sometimes he would
bits of discussion between tycoons about impend-mergers
or stock deals. Larry could have made a
le from the information he gleaned but he was
ily not interested. What concerned him was the air-ae
he flew, powerful and alive and in his control.
lit was two months before Larry piloted Demiris
jmself.
I They were in the Piper and Larry was flying his em-yer
from Athens to Dubrovnik. It was a cloudy day
there was a report of wind storms and squalls
the route. Larry had carefully plotted out the
stormy course, but the air was so full of turbu
that it was impossible to avoid it. him hour out of Athens be flashed on the
"seat belt"
and said to Metaxas, "Hold on, Paul. This may a us both our jobs."
' To Larry's surprise Demiris appeared in the cockpit
lay I join you?" he said. ?elp yourself," Larry said. "It's going to be

5'Metaxas gave up his seat to Demiris and Demiris

strapped himself in. Larry would have preferred to
have the copilot sitting next to him, ready to act if any.

thing went wrong, but it was Demiris' airplane.

The storm lasted almost two hours. Larry circled the large mountains, of clouds that puffed up ahead of them, lovely white and deadly.

"Beautiful," Demiris commented.

"They're killers," Larry said. "Cumulus. The reason they're so nice and fluffy is that there's wind inside of them puffing them up. The inside of that cloud can tear a plane apart in ten seconds. You can rise and fall thirty thousand feet hi less than a minute with no control of your plane."

"I'm sure you wont let that happen," Demiris said calmly.

The winds caught at the plane and tried to fling it across the sky, but Larry fought to keep it under control. He forgot that Demiris was there, focusing his entire attention on the craft he was flying, using every skill he had ever learned. Finally they were out of the storm. Larry turned, drained, and found that Demiris had left the cockpit. Metaxas was in the seat.

"That was a lousy first trip for him, Paul," Larry said. "I may be in trouble."

He was taxiing down the small, mountain-ringed taletop airport at Dubrovnik when Demiris appeared in the doorway of the cockpit.

"You were right," Demiris said to Larry. "You're very good at what you do. I'm pleased."

And Demiris was gone.

One morning as Larry was getting ready to leave on a flight to Morocco, Count Pappas telephoned to suggest that he take Catherine driving through the countryside. Larry insisted that she go.

"Aren't you jealous?" she asked.

"Of the Count?" Larry laughed.

And Catherine suddenly understood. During the time she and the Count had spent together, he had never made an improper advance toward her or even

him her a suggestive look. "He's a homosexual?" she

nodded. "That's why I've left you hi his tender

; Count picked Catherine up early, and they start-iving
south toward the broad plain of Thessaly.
at women dressed hi black walked along the road
' over with heavy loads of wood strapped to their

tiy don't the men do the heavy work?" Catherine

>Count shot her an amused glance.
he women don't want them to," he replied. "They him their men fresh at night for other things." there's a lesson there for all of us, Catherine :wryjy.
the late afternoon they approached the forbid-;-looking
Pindus Mountains, their rocky crags tow
high in the sky. The road was blocked by a flock
beep being herded by a shepherd and a scrawny
dog. Count Pappas stopped the car as they
for the sheep to clear the road. Catherine
lied in wonder as the dog nipped at the heels of
sheep, keeping them in line and forcing them
; direction be wanted them to go. what dog is almost human," Catherine exclaimed
iringly.
lie Count gave her a brief look. There was some
in it that she did not understand,
liat's the matter?" she asked.
Count hesitated. "It's a rather unpleasant

hn a big girl."
6 Count said, "This is a wild area. The land is
and inhospitable. At best the crops are meager,
when the weather turns bad, there are no crops at
I a good deal of hunger." His voice trailed off.
»on," Catherine prompted.
few years ago there was a bad storm here and
the crops were mined. There was little food for anyne.
All the sheep dogs in this area revolted. They
deserted the farms they worked on and gathered together
in a large band." As he continued, he tried to
keep the horror out of his voice. "They began attacking
the farms."
"And killed the sheep!" Catherine said.
There was a silence before he answered. "No. They
killed their masters. And ate them."
Catherine stared at him, shocked.
"They had to send in federal troops from Athens to
restore human government here. It took almost a
month."
"How horrible."
"Hunger does terrible things," Count Pappas said
quietly.
The sheep had crossed the road now. Catherine

looked at the sheep dog again and shuddered.

As the weeks went by, the things that had seemed so foreign and strange to Catherine began to become familiar to her. She found the people open and friendly. She learned where to do her marketing and where to shop for clothes on Voukourestiou Street Greece was a marvel of organized inefficiency, and one had to relax and enjoy it. No one was hi a hurry, and if you asked someone for directions he was likely to take you where you wanted to go. Or he might say, when you asked bow far it was: "Enos cigarou droos," which Catherine learned meant "one cigarette
away." She walked the streets and explored the city and drank the warm dark wine of the Greek summer.
Catherine and Larry visited Mykonos with its colorful windmills and Melos, where the Venus de Milo was discovered. But Catherine's favorite place was Faros, a graceful, verdant island capped by a flower-covered mountain. When their boat docked, a guide stood on the quay. He asked if they would like him to guide them to the top of the mountain on mule-back, and

' clambered aboard two bony moles.
iierine was wearing a broad-brimmed straw bat
protect her from the hot sun. As she and Larry rode
. the steep path leading toward the mountain top,
k-clad women called out, "Ke-lee meh-ra," and touched Catherine gifts of fresh herbs, oregano and ba-|to
put in her hat band. After a two-hour ride, they
bed a plateau, a beautiful tree-filled plain with mil-of
flowers in spectacular bloom. The guide
the mules and they gazed in wonder at the in-iible
profusion of colors.
|"This named Valley of the Butterflies," the guide
1 in halting English.
|Catherine looked around for a butterfly but saw
"Why do they call it that?" she asked.
|The guide grinned as though he had been waiting for
question. "I show you," he said. He dismounted
his mule and picked up a large fallen limb. He
[over to a tree and hit the limb against it with all
> might. In a split second the "flowers" on hundreds a trees suddenly took to the air in a wild rainbow of
lit, leaving the trees bare. The air was filled with
adreds of thousands of gaily colored butterflies
cing in the sunlight.
|Catherine and Larry gazed in awe. The guide stood
them, his face filled with a deep pride, as
he felt responsible for the beautiful miracle
were seeing. It was one of the loveliest days of Catherine's life, and she

thought that if she could
one perfect day to relive, it would be the day
> spent with Larry on Faros.

*'Hey, we got a VIP this morning," Paul Metaxas
need cheerfully. "Wait till you see her." him "Who is it?" on "Noelle Page,
the boss's lady. You can look, but you
t't touch."
> Larry Douglas remembered the brief glimpse he had
had of the woman in Demiris' home the morning
Douglas had arrived in Athens. She was a beauty and
looked familiar, but that of course was because he had
seen her on the screen, in a French picture that Catherine
had once dragged him to. No one had to tell Larry
the rules of self-preservation. Even if the world were
not filled with eager females, he would not have gone
anywhere near Constantin Demiris' girl friend. Larry
liked his job too much to jeopardize it by doing anyhing
so stupid. Well, maybe he would get her autograph
for Catherine.

The limousine taking Noelle to the airport was
slowed down several times by work gangs repairing the
roads, but Noelle welcomed the delays. She was going
to see Larry Douglas for the first time since the meeting
at Demiris' house. Noelle had been deeply shaken
by what had happened. Or, more accurately, what had
not happened.
Over the past six years Noelle had imagined their
encounter in a hundred different ways. She had played
the scene over and over La her mind. The one thing
that had never even occurred to her was that Larry
would not remember her. The most important event in
her life had meant nothing more to him than another
little cheap affair, one of hundreds. Well, before she
was through with him, he would remember her.

Larry was crossing the airfield, flight plan hi hand,
when a limousine pulled up in front of the big plane,
and Noelle Page emerged. Larry walked over to the car
and said pleasantly, "Good morning, Miss Page, I'm
Larry Douglas. I'll be flying you and your guests to
Cannes."
Noelle turned and walked past him as though he had
not spoken, as though he did not exist Larry stood
there, looking after her, bewildered.
Thirty minutes later the other passengers, a dozen of
them, had boarded the plane, and Larry and Paul
took off. They were flying the group to the
d'Azur where they would be picked up and taken
Demiris' yacht. It was an easy flight except for him normal turbulence off
the southern coast of France
and Larry landed the plane smoothly and

over to where some limousines were waiting for
passengers. As Larry left the plane with his stubby
copilot, Noelle walked up to Metaxas, ignoring
and said hi a voice filled with contempt, "The
pilot is an amateur, Paul. You should give him yet lessons." And Noelle got into a car and was
away, leaving Larry standing there, filled with a
led, helpless anger.
the told himself that she was a bitch and he had
pbably happened to catch her on a bad day. But the
incident a week later convinced him that he was yet a serious problem.
| ;On Demiris' orders Larry picked Noelle up in Oslo
flew her to London. Because of what had hap-ned
Larry had gone over the flight plan with particu-care.
There was a high pressure area to the north
1 some possible thunderheads building up to the east
worked out a route that skirted these areas, and
flight proved to be perfectly smooth. He brought
ship down hi a flawless three-point landing, and he
|d Paul Metaxas strolled back to the cabin. Noelle
was putting on some lipstick. "I hope you en-l
your flight, Miss Page," Larry said politely.
Noelle glanced up at him a moment, her face expresless,
then turned to Paid Metaxas. "I'm always her
when I'm flown by an incompetent."
Larry felt his face redden. He started to speak, and
elle said to Metaxas, "Please ask him not to address I in the future unless I speak to him first." one, Metaxas swallowed and mumbled, "Yes, ma'am." I Larry stared at Noelle, his eyes filled with fury, as
rose and left the plane. His impulse had been to
her, but he knew that would have been the end of
He loved this job more than anything he had ever
done, and he did not intend to let anything happen to
it He knew that if he were fifed, it could be the last
flying job he would ever get No, he wotdd have to be
very careful in the future.
When Larry got home, he talked to Catherine about
what had happened.
"She's out to get me," Larry said.
"She sounds horrible," Catherine replied. "Could
you have offended her in some way, Larry?"
"I haven't spoken a dozen words to her."
Catherine took his hand. "Don't worry," she said,
consolingly. "Before you're through, youTI charm her.
Wait and see."
The next day when Larry flew Constantin Demiris
on a brief business trip to Turkey, Demiris came into
the cockpit and took Metaxas' seat He dismissed the
copilot with a wave of his hand, and Larry and Demiris
were alone. They sat there is silence, watching the
small stratus clouds slicing the plane into fluffy geometric
patterns.
"Miss Page has taken a dislike to you," Demiris

said, finally.
Larry felt his hands tighten on the controls and deliberately forced them to relax. He fought to keep his voice calm. "Did--did she say why?"
"She said you were rude to her."
Larry opened his mouth to protest, then thought better of it He would have to Work this out hi his own way.
"I'm sorry. I'll try to be more careful, Mr. Demiris," he said evenly.
Demiris got to his feet. "Do that. I would suggest that you not offend Miss Page any further." He left the cockpit
Any further! Larry racked bjs brain, trying to think of what he might have done to offend her, Perhaps she just did not like his type. Or she could have been jealous of the fact that Demiris liked and trusted him» but that didn't make sense. Nothing Larry could think of any sense. And yet Noelle Page was trying to get
. tflred...:; ,..;'';;'"
(Larry thought about what it was like being out of a the indignity of filling out applications like a ued schoolboy, the interviews, the waiting, the less hours of trying to kill tune with cheap bars and teur whores. He remembered Catherine's patience tolerance and how he had hated her for it. No, he I'll not go through all that again. He could not stand other failure. .

,On a layover in Beirut a few days later Larry passed aovie theater and noticed that the picture playing starred Noelle Page. On an impulse he went to him it, prepared to hate the picture and its star, but No-was so brilliant hi it that he found himself comely carried away by,her performance. Again he had curious feeling of familiarity. The following Mon-Larry flew Noelle Page and some business associ-of Demiris' to Zurich. Larry waited until Noelle ; was alone and then approached her. He had hesi-about talking to her, remembering her last warn-to him, but he had decided that the only way he lid break through her antagonism was to go out of ; way to be pleasant to her. All actresses were egotis-and liked to be told they were good, and so now him came up to her and said, with careful courtesy, "Ex me, Miss Page, I just wanted to tell you that I saw him in a movie the otjier night. The Third Face. I think i're one of the greatest actresses I've ever seen." ; Noelle stared at him a moment and then replied, "I like to believe that you ate a better critic than are a pilot, but I doubt very much that you have the intelligence or the taste.-And she walked

stood rooted there, feeling as though he had
struck. The goddamned cunt! For an instant he him tempted to follow her and
tell her what he thought

of her, but he knew it would be playing into her hands.
No. From now on he would simply do his job and keep
as far away from her as possible.
During the next few weeks Noelle was his passenger
on several flights. Larry did not speak to her at all, and
he tried desperately hard to arrange it so that she did
not see him. He kept out of the cabin and had Metaxas
hand!» any necessary communications with the passengers.
There were no further comments from Noelle
Page, and Larry congratulated himself on having
solved the problem.
As it turned out, he congratulated himself too soon.
One morning Demiris sent for Larry at the villa.
"Miss Page is flying to Paris for me on some confidential
business. I want you to stay at her side."
"Yes, Mr. Demiris,"
Demiris studied him for a moment, started to add
something else, then changed his mind. "That's all."
Noelle was the only passenger on the flight to Paris
and Larry decided to fly the Piper. He arranged for
Paul Metaxas to make Noelle comfortable and stayed
in the cockpit, out of sight during the entire flight.
When they landed, Larry walked back to her seat and
said, "Excuse me, Miss Page. Mr. Demiris asked me to
stay with you while you're in Paris."
She looked up at him with contempt and said, "Very
well. Just don't let me know that you're around."
He nodded in icy silence.
They rode into the city from Qriy in a private limousine.
Larry sat up front with the driver and Noelle
Page sat in back. She did not speak to him during the
journey into the city. Their first stop was Paribas, the
Banque de Paris et they Bas, Larry went into the lobby
with Noelle and waited while she was ushered into the
office of the president and then down to the basement
where the safe-deposit boxes were kept. Noelle was
gone about thirty minutes, and when she returned, she
swept straight past Larry without ft word. He stared after
her a moment, then turned and followed her.
next stop was the rue du Fauboorg-Stê.
NoéHe dismissed the car. Larry followed bet one a department store and stood
nearby while she se*
1 the items she wanted, then handed him the pack-to
carry. She shopped in half a dozen stores:
for some purses and belts, Guedain for per-Celine
for shoes, until Larry was burdened
with packages. If she was aware of his discomfioelle
gave no sign. Larry might have been him pet animal that she was leading

around,
they walked out of Celine'*, it began to rain,
nans were scurrying to take shelter. "Waft here her," Noelle commanded.
stood there and watched her disappear into a
across the street. He waited in the driving
for two hours, his arms full of packages, cursing
land cursing himself for putting tip with her behav-,
He was trapped and he did not know how to get
tofit.
1 he had a terrible foreboding that it was going to
arse.

lie first time Catherine met Constantin Demiris was
villa. Larry had gone there to deliver a package
flown in from Copenhagen, and Catherine had
to the house with him. She was standing in the
reception hall admiring a painting, when a door
and Demiris came out. He watched her a mo-,
then said "Do you like Manet, Mrs. Douglas?" ierine swung around and found herself face to
I with the legend she had heard so much about. She
two immediate impressions: Constantin Demiris
, taller than she had imagined, and there was an
energy in him that was almost frighten-I
Catherine was amazed that he knew her name and
she was. He seemed to go out of his way to put
: ease. He asked Catherine how she liked Greece, ket her apartment was comfortable, and to let him
if he could do anything to help make her stay

pleasant He even knew--though God alone knew
how!---that she collected miniature birds. "I saw a
lovely one," he told her. "I will send it to you."
Larry appeared, and he and Catherine left
"How did you like Demiris?" Larry asked.
"He's a charmer," she said. "No wonder you enjoy
working for bun."
"And I'm going to keep working for him." There
was a grimness hi his voice that Catherine did not understand.
The following day a beautiful porcelain bird was delivered
to Catherine.
Catherine saw Constantin Demiris twice after that,
once when she went to the races with Larry and once
at a Christmas party Demiris gave, at his villa. Each
time he went out of his way to be charming to her. All
in all, Catherine thought, Constantin Demiris was quite
a remarkable person.

In August the Athens Festival began. For two
months the city presented plays, ballets, operas, concerts
--all given in the Herodes Atticus, the ancient
open-air theater at the foot of the Acropolis. Catherine
saw several of the plays with Larry, and when he was

away she went with Count Pappas. It was fascinating
to watch ancient plays staged hi their original settings
by the race that had created them.
One night after Catherine and Count Pappas had
gone to see a production of Medea, they were talking
about Larry.
"He's an interesting man," Count Pappas said. "Polmechanos."
"What does that mean?"
"It is difficult to translate." The Count thought for a
moment "It means fertile hi devices.'"
"You mean 'resourceful'?"
"Yes, but more than that. Someone who is always
very ready with a new idea, a new plan."
"Polymechanos," Catherine sajd. "That's my boy."
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than there was a beautiful, waxing gibbous
The night was balmy and warm. They walked
the Plaka toward Omonia Square. As they
to cross the street, a car raced around the cor headed straight toward them
and the Count pulled get to safety.
' he yelled after the disappearing driver, get here seems to drive Eke that,"
Catherine

Pappas smiled ruefully» "Do you know the
ti? The Greeks haven't made the transition to au-biles.
In their hearts they're stiïl driving donkeys." you're joking." *
afortunately no. If you went insight into the
Catherine, don't read thejguidebooks; read the
> Greek tragedies.. The truth ft, we still belong to
centuries. Emotionally we're very primitive,
filled with grand passions» deep joys and great
and we haven't learned how to cover them up him a civilized veneer."
him not sure that's a bad thing," Catherine replied,
haps not But it distorts reality. When outsiders
at us, they are not seeing what they think they
It is hike looking at a distant star. You are not re-seeing
the star, you are looking at a reflection of
If384-"
had reached the square. They passed a row of
stores with signs in the windows that said "For-*-TeUing."
here are a lot of fortune-tellers here, arent
e?" Catherine asked,
/e are a very superstitious people."
lierine shook her head. "I'm afraid I don't be-sinit."
aey had reached a small taverna. A hand-lettered
in the window read: "MADAME PKIS, FOR-XTELLING."

him you believe in witches?" Count Pappas asked.
ierine looked at him to see if he was teasing. His
face was serious. "Only on Halloween."
"By a witch I do not mean broomsticks and black

cats and boiling kettles."
"What do you mean?"
He nodded toward the sign. "Madame Piris is a witch. She can read the past and the future."
He saw the skepticism on Catherine's face. "I will tell you a story," Count Pappas said. "Many years ago, the Chief of Police in Athens was a man named Sophocles Vasilly. He was a friend of mine and I used my influence to help him get into office. Vasilly was a very honest man. There VKere people who wished to corrupt him and since he would not be corrupted, they decided that he would have to. be eliminated." He took Catherine's arm and they crossed the street toward the park.
"One day, Vasilly came to tell me of a threat that had been made on his life. He was a brave man, but this threat disturbed bun because it came from a powerful and ruthless racketeer. Detectives were assigned to watch the racketeer and to protect Vasilly, but still he had an uneasy feeling that he did not have long to live. That was when he came to me."
Catherine was listening, fascinated. "What did you do?" she asked.
"I advised ban to get a reading from Madame Piris."
He was silent, his thoughts prowling restlessly in some dark arena of the past.
"Did he go?" Catherine finally asked.
"What? Oh, yes. She told Vasilly that death was going to come to him unexpectedly and quickly and warned him to beware of a lion at noon. There are no lions in Greece, except for a few old mangy ones at the zoo and the stone ones you have seen on Delos."
Catherine could feel the tension in Pappas' voice as he continued.
"Vasilly went to the 200 personally to check the cages to make sure that the animals were secure, and he made inquiries as to any wild animals that might recently been brought into Athens. There were

fA week went by and nothing happened, and Vasilly that the old witch had been wrong and that he
: been a superstitious fool for paying any attention
On a Saturday morning I dropped by the police to pick him up. It was his son's fourth birthday,
. we were going to take a boat trip to Kyron to cele.
: drove up in front of the station just as the clock in " him Hall was striking twelve. As I reached the
ace, there was a tremendoss explosion from lathe building, I hurried inside ,to Vasilly's office." I voice sounded stiff and awkward. "There was noth
left of the office--or of Vasilly^
low horrible/' Catherine mufjtoured.
bey walked on for a moment favour» silence. "But the was wrong, wasn't she?" Catherine asked. "He wasn't killed by a lion."

kh, but he was, you see. The police reconstructed had happened. As I told you, it was the boy's bday. Vasilly's desk was piled with gifts that he was to bring to his son. Someone had brought in a bday gift, a toy, and laid it on Vasilly's desk."
iCatherine felt the blood leaving her face. "A toy m ?

ount Pappas nodded. "Yes. 'Beware of a lion at '"
|Catherine shuddered. "That gives me the creeps."
le looked down at her sympathetically. "Madame him is not a ¥un' fortune-teller to go to.'-' him
hey had crossed through the park and reached Pi-Street. An empty taxi was passing by. The Count iled it, and ten minutes later Catherine was back at : apartment
:;As she prepared for bed, she told Larry the story, , as she told it, her flesh began to crawl again. Larry her tightly and made love to her, but it was a ; time before Catherine was able to fall asleep.

Noelle AND
CATHERINE

Athens: 1946

15

K it had not been for Noelle Page, Larry Douglas would have had no worries. He was Where he wanted to be, doing what he Wanted to do. He enjoyed his job, the people he met, Eftd the man for Whom he worked. On the ground his. fife was equally satisfactory. When he was not flying, he Ipent a good part of his time with Catherine; but because Larry's job' was so mobile, Catherine was not always aware of where he was, and Larry found innumerable opportunities to go out on his own. He went to parties with Count Pappas and Paul Metaxas, his copilot, and a satisfying number of them turned into orgies. Greek women were filled with passion and fire. He had found a new one, Helena, a stewardess who worked for Demiris, and when they had a stopover away from Athens, she and Larry shared a hotel room. Helena was a beautiful, slim, dark-eyed girl, and insatiable. Yes, everything considered, Larry Douglas decided that his life was perfect.
Except for Demiris' blond bitch mistress.
Larry had not the slightest clue as to what made Noelle Page despise him, but whatever it was, it was endangering his way of life. Larry had tried being polite, aloof, friendly, and each time Noelle Page succeeded in making him look like a fool. Larry knew that he could

go to Demiris, but he had no illusions about what
would happen if it came to a choice between him and
Noelle. Twice, he had arranged for Paul Metaxas to
take over Noelle's flight but shortly before each flight
Demiris' secretary had telephoned to tell him that Mr.
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him would like to have Larry pilot her himself.
| On an early morning in late November Larry re
call that he was to fly Noelle Page to Amster-that
afternoon. Larry checked with the airport
received a negative report on the weather in Am-lam.
A fog was beginning to roll in and by after-they
expected zero visibility. Larry phoned dos' secretary to tell her that it would be impossible
.fly to Amsterdam that day. him secretary said she I'll get back to him. Fifteen minutes later she
to say that Miss Page would be at the airport
: two o'clock, ready to take off. Larry checked with
airport again, thinking that pethaps there had been
reak in the weather, but the report was the same.
"Jesus Christ,'*' Paul Metaxas'exclaimed. "She must I in one hell of a hurry to get to Amsterdam."
But Larry had the feeling that Amsterdam was not
issue. This was a contest of wills between the two I them. For all he cared Noelle Page could crash into
^mountain peak and good riddance, but Larry was
tied if he was going to risk his own neck for the and bitch. He tried to phone Pemiris to discuss it
him, but he was in a meeting and unavailable,
slammed down the phone, seething. He had no
ace now but to go to the airport and try to talk his
enger out of making the flight He arrived at the
at 1:30. By three o'clock Noelle Page had not
"She probably changed her mind," Metaxas

} But Larry knew better. As the time wore on, he be
more and more furious, until he realized that that
her intention. She was trying to drive him into a
action that would cost him his job. Larry was in
terminal building talking to the airport manager him Demiris' familiar gray Rolls drove up and Noelle him emerged. Larry walked outside to meet her.
*Tm afraid the flight's off, Miss Page," he said, mak his voice flat. "The airport at Amsterdam is fogged

If

Noelle looked past Larry as though he did not exist
and said to Paul Metaxas, "The plane carries automatic

landing equipment, does it not?"
"Yes, it does," Metaxas said, awkwardly.
"I'm really surprised," she replied, "that Mr. Demiris would hire a pilot who's a coward. Ill speak to him about it."
Noelle turned and walked toward the plane.
Metaxas looked after her and said, "Jesus Christ! I don't know what's gotten into her. She never used to act like this, I'm sorry, Larry."
Larry watched Noelle walk across the field, her blond hair blowingiin the wind. He had never hated anyone so much in his life.
Metaxas was watching him. "Are we going?" he asked.
"We're going."
The copilot gave a deep, expressive sigh, and the two men slowly walked toward the plane.
Noelle Page was sitting in the cabin, leisurely thumbing through a fashion magazine when they entered the plane. Larry stared at her a moment, so filled with anger that he was afraid to speak. He went up into the cockpit and began his preflight check.
Ten minutes later he had received clearance from the tower and they were airborne for Amsterdam.
The first half of the flight was uneventful. Switzerland lay below in a mantle of snow. By the tune they were over Germany, it was dusk. Larry radioed ahead to Amsterdam for a weather check. They reported that fog was blowing in from the North Sea and getting thicker. He cursed his bad luck. If the winds had changed and the fog had cleared, his problem would have been solved, but now he had to decide whether to risk an instrument landing at Amsterdam or fly to an alternate airport. He was tempted to go back and discuss it with his passenger, but he could visualize the contemptuous look on her face.
tial Flight one-oh-nine, would you give us your
"plan, please?" It was the tower at Munich. Larry
jkto make a decision swiftly. He could still land at els, Cologne or Luxembourg. " Amsterdam.
voice crackled over the speaker again. "Special one-oh-nine, would you give us your flight plan,
to
snapped down the transmitting key. "Special one-oh-nlne to Munich Ti»wer. We're going to sterdam." He flicked the switch up and was aware fetaxas watching Mm. "*
Jesus, maybe I should have doubled my life insuretaxas said. "You really mink we're going to keit?"
you want to know the troth?"* Larry said, bit-"I don't give a shit." him '
Fantastic! I'm up in a plane with two rucking mani!"

Metaxas moaned.
For the next hour Larry was wholly absorbed in
the aircraft, listening to the frequent weather re-without
comment. He was still hoping for a wind
but thirty minutes out of Amsterdam the re
was still the same. Heavy fog. The field was closed
air traffic except for emergencies. Larry made
with the control tower at Amsterdam. "Special
one-oh-nine to Amsterdam Tower. Approaching
from 75 miles east of Cologne, ETA nineteen
I hours." ,
st instantly a voice on the radio crackled back,
Tower to Special Flight one-oh-nine. Our
is dosed down. We suggest you return to Cologne
1 at Brussels."
spoke into the handmike. "Special Flight
-nine to Amsterdam Tower. Negative. We have
icy."
him turned to stare at him in surprise,
new voice came over the speaker. "Special Flight
one-oh-nine, this is Chief of Operations at Amsterdam
Airport We are completely fogged in here. Visibility
zero. Repeat: visibility zero. What is the nature of your
emergency?"
"We're running out of fuel," Larry said. "I have
barely enough to reach you."
Metaxas' eyes went to the fuel gauges, which registered
half full. "For Christ's sakes," Metaxas exploded.
"WecouldflytoCtónal"
The radio was silent Suddenly it exploded into life
again. (>
"Amsterdam Tower to Special, Flight one-oh-nine.
You have an emergejpey clearance, «Well bring you in."
"Roger." Larry pcked off the switch and turned to
Metaxas. "Jettison Che fuel," he ordered.
Metaxas swallowed and said in a choked voice,
"7--jettison the fuel?"
"You heard me, Paul. Leave just enough to bring us
in."
"But, Larry . . /*
"Damn it, don't argue. If we roll in there with a tank
half full of gas, they'll jerk our licenses away so fast
you won't know what hit you."
Metaxas nodded glumly and reached for the fuel-ejection
handle. He began to pump, keeping a close
eye on the gauge.]$ive minutes later they were in the
fog, wrapped in a soft white cotton that wiped out everything
but the dimly lit cockpit they sat in. It was an
eerie sensation, cut off from time and space and the
rest of the world. The last time Larry had been through
this was hi the Link Trainer. But that was a game
where there were no risks. Here the stakes were life
and death. He wondered what it was doing to his passenger.

He hoped it gave her a heart attack. The Amsterdam
control tower came on again.
"Amsterdam control tower to Special Flight one-oh-nine.
I am going to bring you in on A.L-S. You will
please follow my instructions exactly. We have you on
our radar. Turn three degrees west and maintain
altitude until further instructions. At your
airspeed, you should be landing in eighteen
»

He voice coming over the radio sounded tense,
good reason, thought Larry grimly. One slight
: and the plane would plough into the sea. Larry
the correction and shut out everything from his
but the disembodied voice that was his sole link
He flew the plane as though it were a part
ffjhimself, flying it with his heart, his soul and his
He was dimly aware of Paul Metaxas sweating
him, calling out a constant instrument check in v, strained voice, but if
they came out of this «live,
id be Larry Douglas who did: ft. Larry had never
fog like this. It was a ghostly enemy, charging at a from every side,
blinding him» seducing him, trying on him into making one fatal mistake. He was
hur-;
through the sky at two hundred and fifty miles an a, unable to see beyond the
winfishield of the cock-Pilots
bated fog, and the first tide was: Climb over
dive under it, but get out of it! Now there was no i'll, because he was
locked into an impossible destina-by
the whim of a spoiled tart. He was helpless, at him mercy of instruments that
could go wrong and men
tie ground who could make mistakes. The disem-voice
came over the speaker again, and it
led to Larry that it had a new, nervous quality.
"Amsterdam Tower to Special Flight one-oh-nine.
are coming into the first leg of your landing pat-Lower
your flaps and begin your descent. De-to
two thousand feet. . . fifteen hundred feet I'll one thousand feet..."
no sign of the airport below. They could have
in the middle of nowhere. He could feel the
id rushing up to meet the plane.
: your airspeed to one hundred twenty. . .
your wheels . . . you're at six hundred feet. . .
one hundred . . . you're at four hundred feet
it." And still no sign of the goddamn airport! The
blanket of smothering cotton seemed thicker now.
Metaxas* forehead gleamed with perspiration. "Where
in the hell is it?" he whispered.
Larry stole a swift glance at the altimeter. The needle
was edging down toward three hundred feet. Then
it was below three hundred feet The ground was rushing
up to meet them at one hundred miles per hour.
The altimeter showed only one hundred fifty feet.

Something was wrong. He should have been able to see the airport lights by now. He strained to see ahead of the plane, but there was only the treacherous, blinding fog whipping across the windshield.
Larry heard Metaxas' voice, tense and hoarse.
"We're down to sixtjyteet." And still nothing.
"Forty feet." ;
And the ground racing up to meet them in the darkness. ,
, "Twenty feet." ,
It was no good, la another two seconds, the margin of safety would be gone and they would crash. He had to make an instant decision.
"I'm going to take it back up," Larry said. His hand tightened on the wheel and started to pull back and at that instant, a row of electric arrows blazed out on the ground ahead of them, lighting up the runway below.
Ten seconds later, they were on the ground, taxiing toward the Schiphol terminal.
When they had come to a stop, Larry switched off the engines with numb fingers and sat motionless for a long time. Finally he pushed himself to his feet and was surprised to find that his knees were trembling. He noticed a strange odor in the air and turned to Metaxas. Metaxas grinned sheepishly.
"Sorry," he said. "I shat."
Larry looked down at bun and nodded. "For both of us," he said. He turned and walked back into the cabin. The bitch was in there, calmly thumbing through a magazine. Larry stood there studying her, aching to tell her off, wishing desperately that he could find the to what made her tick. Noelle Page must have how dose she had come to death in the past minutes, and yet she sat there looking serene and , not a hair out of place.
^Amsterdam," Larry announced.

hey drove into Amsterdam in a heavy silence, No in the back seat of the Mercedes 300 and Larry in : with the chauffeur. Metaxas had stayed at the air to have the plane serviced. The fog was still thick they drove slowly until suddenly, when they found the Lindenplatz, it began to lift.
rode through the City Skpare, crossed .tífce Ei-Bridge over the Amstel River and stopped in: front ,the Amstel Hotel When they reached the lobby, I said to Larry, "You will pa* me up at tea sharp
lit," then turned away and walked toward the clear, the manager of the hotel bowing and scraping at /heels. A bellboy led Larry to\a small, uncomforte single room at the back of the hotel on the first The room was next to the kitchen, and through wall Larry could hear the -clatter of dishes and

aell the mixed aromas from the steaming kettles.
jjr, Larry took one look at the tiny room and snapped,
^wouldn't put my dog in here."
"I'm'sorry," the bellboy said apologetically. "Miss
I requested the cheapest room we had for you." ktOkay, Larry thought, I'tt
find a way to beat her.
stantin Demiris isn't the only man in the world
uses a private pilot. I'll start checking tomorrow. We met a lot of his rich
friends. There are half a dozen
[them who would be damned glad to hire me. But
he thought: Not if Demiris fires me. If that hap
none of them will touch me. I have to hang in
re. The bathroom was down the hall, and Larry un-and
took out a robe so that he could go take a
then thought: To hell with it, why should I bathe jr. her? I hope I smell
like a pig. He» went to the hotel
to have a badly needed drink. He was on his third

martini when he looked up at the clock over the bar
and saw that it was 10:15. Ten of clock sharp, she had
said. Larry was filled with a sudden panic. He hastily
slapped some bills on the bar and headed toward the
elevator. Noelle was in the Emperor Suite on the fifth
floor. He found himself running down the long corridor
and cursing himself for letting her do this to him. He
knocked at the door to her suite, his mind forming excuses
for his tardiness. No one answered his knock and
when Larry turned the knob, it was off the latch. He
walked into the laige, luxuriously furnished living
room and stood thine a moment, Uncertainly, then
called out, "Miss Page." There was no answer. So that was her plan. , <"

I'm sorry, Costa darting, but 1 warned you that he
was unreliable. I asked him to pick me up at ten
o'clock, but he m$ down in the bar getting drunk. I
had to leave without him.

Larry heard a sound from the bathroom and went
toward it. The bathroom door was Open. He walked inside
just as Noelle Page stepped out of the shower. She
wore nothing but a turkish towel turbanned around her
head.

Noelle turned and saw him standing there. An apology
sprang to Larry's lips, trying to head off her indignation,
but before he could speak, Noelle said indifferently,
"Hand me that towel," as though he were a
maid. Or a eunuch. Larry could have coped with her

indignation or anger, but her arrogant indifference made something explode inside him.

He moved toward her and grabbed her, knowing as he did it that he was throwing away everything he wanted for the cheap satisfaction of a petty revenge, but there was no way he could have stopped himself. The rage inside him had been building up for months, fed by the indignities he had received from her, the gratuitous insults, the humiliation, the risking of his life. All these things were burning in him as he reached for her naked body. If Noelle had screamed, Larry

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have knocked her senseless. But she saw the
: look on his face and made no sound as he picked I up and earned her into
the bedroom.
aewhere in Larry's mind a voice was shouting to
to stop, to apologize, to say that he was drunk, to
out before it was too late to save himself, but he a it was already too late.
There was no going back,
threw her savagely down on the bed and moved
[her.
|He concentrated on her body, refusing to let his
"" id think of what his punishment was going to be for
Stat he was doing. He had no illusions as to what De-would
do to him for this, &^r the Greek's honor
ííuld not be satisfied with merely firing him.1 Larry
ew enough about the tycoon to'know that his wen-nce
would be far more terrible,'and yet knowing
Larry could not stop himself^Sfae lay on the bed,
oking up at him, her eyes blazing* He moved down
: top of her and was entering hetjinever realizing un-that
instant bow much he had been wanting to do
all along, and somehow the.need was all mixed
with the hate, and he felt her arms wrap around
: neck, holding him close, as though she would nev-let
him go, and she said, "Welcome back," and it
through Larry's mind that she was crazy or
was confusing him with someone else, but he
Pdn't care because her body was twisting and writh-beneath
him, and he forgot everything else in the
isation of what was happening to him, and the sud-blinding
wonderful knowledge that now every-ag
was going to be all right

Noelle AND
CATHERINE
Athens: 1946

16

Inexplicably, Time bad become Catherine's enemy. She
was unaware of it at first, and looking back she could
not have told the exact moment that Time began to
work against her. She was not aware when Larry's love
had gone or why or how, but one day it had simply disappeared
somewhere down the endless corridor of time
and all that was left was a cold hollow echo. She sat in
the apartment alone day after day, trying to figure out
what had happened, what had gone wrong. There was
nothing specific Catherine could think of, no single moment
of revelation that she could point to and say, That was it, that was when
Larry stopped loving me. Possibly it had started when Larry came back after
three weeks in Africa where he had flown Constantin
Demiris on a safari. Catherine had missed Larry more
than she had thought possible. He's away all the time, she thought Ifs tike
during the war, only this time
there's no enemy.
But she was wrong. There was an enemy.
"I haven't told you the good news," Larry said. "I
got a raise. Seven hundred a month. How about that?"
"Thaf him wonderful," she replied. "We can go back
home that much sooner." She saw his face tighten.
"What's the matter?"
"This is home," Larry said, curtly.
She stared at him uncomprehendingry. "Well, for
now," she agreed weakly, "but I mean--you wouldn't
want to live here forever."
"You've never had it so good," Larry retorted. "It's
* living at a vacation resort."
a it's not like living in America, is it?"
America," Larry said. "I risked my ass for it
^ four years and what did it get me? A handful of
; medals. They wouldn't even give me a job after
»war."
aat's not true," she said. "You . . ."
riwhat?"
Catherine did not want to provoke an argument,
ticularly on his first night back. "Nothing, darling," on said. "You're
tired. Let's go to bed early." v
"" et's not." He went to the tor to pour himself a
"A new act's opening at the Argentina Night
ilb. I told Paul Metaxas that we'd join him and a few
5."
ierine looked at-jhim. "Larry***-'* She had to fight
her voice steady. "Larry, w« haven't seen each
for almost a month. We never get a chance to-- : sit and talk." ' *
can't help it if my work takas me away," he re
"Don't you think I'd like to be with you?"
He shook her head and said, "I don't know. I'll him to ask the Ouija board."
le put his arms around her then and grinned that
at, boyish grin. "To hell with Metaxas and the
ale crowd. We'll stay in tonight, just the two of us.
ay?"

Catherine looked into his face and knew that she
being unreasonable. Of course he couldn't help it
job took him away from her. And when he got get, it was natural that he would want to see other
j>le. "We'll go out if you like," she decided. I *OJhn-uhn." He held her close. "Just the two of us."
Ifhey did not leave the apartment all weekend, get cooked and they made love and sat in front get fire and talked and played gin rummy and read,
1 it was everything that Catherine could have asked.
nday night after a delicious dinner that Catherine
pared, they went to bed and made love again. She
lay in bed watching Larry as he walked down toward
the bathroom, naked, and she thought what a beautiful
man he is and how lucky I am that he belongs to me,
and the smile was still on her face when Larry turned
at the bathroom door and said casualty, "Make a lot of
dates next week, will you, so we won't have to be stuck
with each other like this again with nothing to do."
And he went into the bathroom leaving Catherine with
the smile still frozen on her face.
,;<
Or perhaps the trouble had started .with Helena, the
beautiful Greek stewardess. One hot summer afternoon,
Catherine had been out shopping. Larry was out
of town. She was «xpecting him home the following
day and had decided to surprise him with his favorite
dishes. As Catherine was leaving the market with her
arms full of groceries, a taxi passed her. In the back
seat was Larry, his arms around a girl in a stewardess*
uniform. Catherine bad one brief glimpse of their faces
laughing together, and then the taxi turned a corner
and was out of sight
Catherine stood there numb, and it Was not until
some small boys came running up to her that she realized
the grocery bags had slipped from her nerveless
fingers. They had helped Catherine pick up everything
and she had stumbled home, her mind refusing to
think. She had tried to tell herself that it had not been
Larry she had seen in the taxi, it had been someone
who resembled him. But the truth was that no one in
the world resembled Larry. He was unique, an original
work of God, a priceless creation of nature. And he
was all hers. Hers and the brunette's in the taxi, and
how many others?
Catherine sat up all that night waiting for Larry to
walk in, and when he did not come home, she knew
that there was no excuse that he could give her mat
could hold their marriage together, and no excuse that
she could give herself. He was a liar and a cheat, and
she could not stay married to him any longer.
did not return home until late the following
irnoon.
," he said cheerfully, as he walked into the apart-He

put down his flight bag and saw her face,
iat's wrong?"
lien did you get back to town?" Catherine asked

ay-looked
at her, puzzled. "About an hour ago.
kyr
"I saw you in a taxi yesterday «with a girl." Jt was as
le as that, Catherine thought, Those are the words
ended my marriage. He's going to deny it, and I'm to call Mm a liar and leave' Mm and never see
{again,"
it Larry was standing there staring at her.
| "Go ahead," she said. 'Tell me it wasn't you."
liLarry looked at her, nodding. "Of course it was
e." The sudden sharp pain Catherine felt at the pit of
stomach made her realize how much she had wanted him to deny it
|f"Christ," he said, "what have you been thinking?"
She started to speak and her voice trembled with an-r."l-~"
held up a hand. "Don't say anything you'll be
rfor."
I, Catherine looked at him incredulously. "I'll be sorry
?

I, "I flew back to Athens yesterday for fifteen minutes
pick up a girl named Helena Merelis to fly her to
for Demiris. Helena works for him as a stew-3ess."
'/'But ..." It was possible. Larry could have been yet the truth; or was it polymechanos, fertile in
idces? "Why didn't you telephone me?" Catherine
,M
l"I did," Larry said curtly. "There was no answer.
him were out, weren't you?"
Catherine swallowed "I--I went out shopping for
' dinner."
"I'm not hungry," Laiiy snapped. "Nagging always
makes me lose my appetite." He turned and walked out
the door, leaving Catherine standing there, her right
hand still raised, as though it was silently beseeching
him to come back.

It was shortly after that that Catherine began to
drink. It started in a small, harmless way. She would be
expecting Larry home for dinner at seven o'clock, and
when nine o'clock came and he had not called, Catherine
would have a brandy to help kill the time. By ten
o'clock, she would have had several brandies, and by
the time he came 'vhome, if he did, the dinner would
have been long since ruined, and she would be a little
tight. It made it much easier to face what was happening
to her life.
Catherine could no longer hide from herself the fact
that Larry was cheating on her and had probably been

cheating from the time they were married. Going through his uniform trousers one day before sending them to the cleaners, she found a lace handkerchief with dried semen. There was lipstick on his shorts. She thought of Larry hi the arms of some other woman.

And she wanted to kQl him.

Noelle AND
CATHERINE

Athens: 1946

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him Time had become Catherine's enemy, so it had be-ae Larry's friend. The night in Amsterdam had been less than a miracle. Larry had courted disaster in so doing had, incredibly, found tibte solution to : his problems. It's the Douglas lack, he thought with action.

I But he knew that it was more than luck. It was some perverse instinct In him that needed to chal-the Fates, to brush against the parameters of ath and destruction, a testing, a pitting of himself nst Fortune for life-and-death stakes.

. Larry remembered a morning over the Truk Islands a squadron of Zeros had zoomed out of a cloud He had been flying point, and they had concealed their attack on him. Three Zeros had maneu-him away from the rest of the squadron and need fire on him. In a kind of supraclarity that came : him in moments of danger, he was blindingly aware |Nhe island below, the dozens of ships bobbing on the seas, the roaring planes slashing at each other in him bright blue sky. It was one of the happiest moments Larry's life, the fulfillment of Life and the mocking eath.

*He had put the plane into a spin and had pulled Out lit on the tail of one of the Zeros. He had watched it lode as he opened up with his machine guns. The two planes had closed in on either side. Larry tied them as they raced down to him, and at the instant he pulled the plane into an Immelmann, and the two Japanese planes collided in mid-air. It was a moment Larry savored in his mind often.

For some reason it had come back to him that night in Amsterdam. He had made wild, violent love to Noelle, and afterward she had lain in his arms, talking of the two of them in Paris together before the war, and it suddenly brought back a dim memory of an eager young girl, but good God, there had been hundreds of eager young girls since then, and Noelle was no more than an elusive, half-recalled wisp of memory hi his past him ,«

How lucky it was, Larry thought, that their paths had crossed again accidentally, after all these years.
"You belong to me," Noelle said. "You're mine now." .' i.>ii
Something hi her tone made Larry uneasy. And yet, he asked himself, wfe»i do I have to tone?
With Noelle under his control, he could stay on with Demiris forever, if he wanted to.
She was studying him as though reading his mind, and there was an odd expression in her eyes that Larry did not understand.
It was just as wefl.

On a return trip from Morocco Larry took Helena out to dinner and spent the night at her apartment.
In the morning he drove to the airport to check out his plane. He had lunch with Paul Metaxas.
"You look like you hit the jackpot," Metaxas said. "Can, you spare a piece for me?"
"My boy," Larry grinned, "you couldn't handle them. It takes a master."
They had a pleasant lunch and then Larry drove back into town to pick up Helena, who was to be on his flight
He knocked at the door of her apartment and after a long while, Helena slowly opened it. She was naked.
Lany stared at her, not recognizing her. Her face and body were a mass of ugly bruises and puffy swellings.
I were slits of pain. She had been beaten up by sional.
' Larry exclaimed. "What happened?"
opened her mouth and Larry saw that three upper front teeth had been knocked out "T-- him," she chattered. "They came hi as soon as you

at you call die police?" Larry demanded, horri-said they would kill me if I told anyone, meant it, L--Larry." She stood there in shock, ; onto the door for support.
Md they rob you?"
no. They f--forced their way in and raped me him they--they beat me up." '
some clothes on," he ordered. "I'm taking you on hospital" ' (
E cant g--go out with my face like this," she said, of course she was right. Larry telephoned a who was a friend of his and arranged for him to iover.
sorry I cant stay," Larry told Helena. "I have Demiris out in half an hour. till see you as soon turn."
he never saw her again. When Larry returned |4ays later, the apartment was empty, and the land told him that the young lady had moved and had forwarding address. Even then Larry had no

of the truth. It was not until several nights
| when he was making love to Noelle that be had
; of what had happened. "You're so goddamn
he said. "I've never known anybody like

»1 give you everything you want?" she asked.
JT«s," he moaned, "Oh, Christ, yes."
elle stopped what she was doing. "Then don't
Asleep with another woman," she said softly» "Next a 111 kill her."
remembered her words: You belong to me.
And they suddenly took on a new and ominous meaning.
For the first time he had the premonition that this
was not some fly-by-night affair that he could get out
of anytime he felt like it He sensed the cold, deadly,
untouchable center mat was in Noette Page, and he
was chilled and a little frightened by it Half a dozen
times during the night he started to bring up the subject
of Helena, and each time he stopped because he was
afraid to know, afraid to have it put into words, as
though the words had more power man the deed itself.
If Noelle were capable of that . . .
At breakfast the next morning Larry studied Noelle
when she was unaware of it, looking for signs of cruelty,
of sadism, but? all he saw was a loving, beautiful
woman, telling him amusing anecdotes, anticipating
and catering to htsr every want 14iave to be wrong
about her, he thought. But after that he was careful not
to date any other girts, and in a few short weeks he had
lost all desire to do so because Noelle had become a
complete obsession with him.
From the beginning Noelle warned Larry that it was
essential that they keep their affair from Constantin
Demiris. 'a
"There must never be the slightest whisper of suspicion
about us," Noelle cautioned.
"Why don't I rent an apartment?" Larry suggested.
"A place where we *.»"
Noelle shook her head. "Not in Athens. Someone
would recognize me. Let me think about it"
Two days later Demiris sent for Larry. At first Larry
was apprehensive, wondering whether the Greek
tycoon could have heard about Noelle and him, but
Demiris greeted him pleasantly and led him into a discussion
of a new plane he was considering buying.
"It's a converted Mitchell 'Bomber," Demiris told
him, "I want you to have a look at it"
Larry's face lit up. "If him a great plane," he said. "For
its weight and size, it will give you the best ride you
can buy."
'many passengers will it carry?"
thought a moment. "Nine in luxury, plus a pi
navigator and flight engineer. It flies at four hun-\ eighty miles an hour."
sounds interesting. Will you check it out for me

I give me a report?"
[cant wait," Larry grinned.
rose to his feet "By the way Douglas, Mess
is going to Berlin in the morning. I want you to a there."
a hers, sir," Larry said. And then added, innocently,
Miss Page tell you that we're getting along bet-looked
up at him. "No," he said, puzzled,
a matter of fact this morning she complained to him about your insolence.".
stared at him hi surprise, and then as realiza-flooded
through him, he quickly tried to cover up
blunder. "I'm trying, Mr. Demiris," he said ear-y.'Tlltry
harder."
nodded. "Do that. You're the best pilot I've 1 had, Douglas. It would be a shame to..." He let
|voice trail off, but the message was clear.
the drive home Larry cursed himself for a fool. him had better remember he was playing in the big
lies now. Noelle had been bright enough to realize
any sudden change in her attitude toward Larry
make Demiris suspicious. The old relationship
them was a perfect cover for what they were
Demiris was trying to bring them together. The
: made Larry laugh aloud. It was a good feeling
now that he had something that one of the most
I men in the world thought belonged to him.

the flight to Berlin Larry turned the wheel over
Metaxas and told him that he was going back
: to Noelle Page.
a*t you afraid of getting your head bitten off?"
axas asked.

Larry hesitated, tempted to brag. But lie conquered the impulse. "She's a bitch on wheels," Larry shrugged, "but if I don't find Borne way to soften tier up, I could find myself out on my ass."

"Good luck," Metaxas said soberly.

"Thanks."

Larry carefully closed the cockpit door and went back to the lounge where Noelle was seated. The two stewardesses were at the rear of the plane. Larry started to sit down across from Noelle.

"Be careful," she warned softly. "Everyone who works for Constant!» reports back to him."

Larry glanced toward the stewardesses and thought of Helena. 4 '

"I've found a place for us," Noelle said. There was pleasure and excitement in her voice.

"An apartment?*' <

"A house. Do you know where Rafina is?"

Larry shook his head. "No."

"It's a little village on the sea, a hundred kilometers north of Athens. We have a secluded villa there/'

He nodded. "Whose name did you rent it in?"

"I bought it," Noelle said, "in someone else's name."

Larry wondered what it must feel like to be able to afford to buy a villa just to get in the hay with someone once in a while. "Great," he said. "I can't wait to see it."

She studied him a moment. "Will you have any trouble getting away from Catherine?"

Larry looked at Noelle in surprise. It was the first time she had ever mentioned his wife. He had certainly made no secret of his marriage, but it was a strange feeling to hear Noelle use Catherine's name. Obviously she had done some checking, and knowing her as well as he was beginning to, it was probably very thorough. She was waiting for an answer. "No," Larry replied. "I come and go as I please."

Noelle nodded, satisfied. "Good. Constantin is going

him business cruise to Dubrovnik. I've told him I cant one with him. Well have ten lovely days together.
jktt better go now."
' tamed and walked back to the cockpit

low did it go?" Metaxas asked. "Loosen her up
»>

lot much," Larry replied, carefully. "It's going to itime."
owned a car, a Gtroen convertible, but at No-i insistence, he went to a small rent-a-car agency in and hired an automobile. Noelle had driven up alone and Larry was to join her there. The

was a pleasant one on a winding ribbon of dusty
high above the sea. Two and a half hours out of
Larry came to a tiny, charming village nestled
; the coastline. Noelle had given him careful direc
so that he would not have to stop and inquire at
village. As he reached the outskirts of the village, opened to the left and drove down a small dirt road
; led to the sea. There were several villas, each one
behind high stone walls, At the end of the
built on an outcropping of rock on a promontory
jutted out over the water was a large, luxurious*
; villa.
drove up to the gate and rang the bell. A mo-later
the electric gate swung open. He drove in-said the gate closed behind him. He found himself
> large courtyard with a fountain in the center. The
of the courtyard were filled with a profusion of
The house itself was a typical Mediterranean
as impregnable as a fortress. The front door
led and Noelle appeared, wearing a white cotton
They stood there smiling at each other, and then one was in his arms.
and see your new house," she said eagerly,
I she took him inside.
interior of the house was cavernous, large < rooms with high domed ceilings. There was an
enormous living room downstairs, a library, a formal
dining room and an old-fashioned kitchen with a circular
cooking range in the center. The bedrooms were
upstairs.
"What about the servants?" Larry asked.
"You're looking at them."
Larry regarded her in surprise. "You're going to do
the cooking and cleaning?"
She nodded. "There will be a couple coming in to
clean after we leave here, but they will never see us. I
arranged it through an agency."
Larry grinned sardonically.
There was a warning note hi Noelle's voice. "Don't
ever make the mistake of underestimating Constantin
Demiris. If he finds out about us, he will kill both of
us."
Larry smiled* "You're exaggerating," he said. "The
old man may not like it, but . . ."
Her violet eyes locked on his. "He with kill us both."
There was something in her voice that sent a feeling of
apprehension through him.
"You're serious, aren't you?"
"I was never more serious in my Bfe. He's ruthless."
"But when you say hell Ml us," Larry protested,
"he wouldn't . . ."
"He won't use bullets," Noelle said flatly. "HeU find
a complicated, ingenious way to do it, and hell never
be punished for it" Her tone lightened. "But he won't

find out, darling. Come, let me show you our bedroom."
She took his hand and they went up the sweeping stairway. "We have four guest bedrooms," she said and added with a smile, "we can try them all." She took him into the master bedroom, a huge corner suite that overlooked the sea. From the window Larry could see a large terrace and the short path that wound down to the water. There was a dock with a large sailboat and a motor boat moored to it
"Who do the boats belong to?"
"You," she said. "It's your welcome-home present"
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him turned to her and found that she had slipped oat cotton dress. She was naked. They spent the rest »afternoon in bed.

him next ten days flew by. Noelle was quicksilver, a a genie, a dozen beautiful servants catering to rs every wish before he even knew what he
He found the library in the villa stocked with favorite books and records. Noelle cooked all his dishes to perfection, sailed with him, swam hi warm blue sea with him, made love to him, gave massages at night until he fell asleep. In a sense were prisoners there together, for they dared not anyone else. Every day Larry found new facets in He. She entertained him with fascinating anecdotes famous people she knew. She tried to discuss aess and politics with him until she found that he him interested in neither.
LThey played poker and gin rummy, and Larry was ous because he could never win. Noelle taught him and backgammon and he could never beat her at a. On their first Sunday at the villa she fixed a deli-i
picnic lunch, and they sat on the beach in the sun enjoyed it While they were eating, Noelle looked him and saw two men in the distance. They were stroll-I
toward them along the beach.
| "Let's go inside," Noelle said.
I Larry looked up and saw the men. "Jesus, don't be They're just a couple of villagers out for a

jpfNow," she commanded.
j."OK," he said ungraciously, irritated by the incident
1 by her tone.
IfHelp me pack up the dungs."
ÍfWhy don't we just leave them?" he asked.
IfBecause it would look suspicious."
the they stuffed everything into the picnic ham- and started toward the house. Larry was silent for
rest of the afternoon. He sat in the library, his mind preoccupied, while Noelle worked in the kitchen.

Late in the afternoon she came into the library and sat at his feet. With her uncanny knack of reading his mind, she said. "Stop thinking about them."

"They were just a couple of goddamn villagers," Larry snapped. "I hate sneaking around like some kind of criminal." He looked at her and his voice changed. "I don't want to have to hide from anybody. I love you."

And Noelle knew that this time it was true. She thought of the years during which she had planned to destroy Larry and of the fierce pleasure she had taken hi imagining his destruction: And yet the moment Noelle had seen Larry again she had known instantly that there was something deeper than hate still alive in her. When she had pushed him to the brink of death, forcing him to risk both their lives on that terrible flight to Amsterdam, it was as though she were testing his love for her in a wild defiance of fate. She had been with Larry in that cockpit, flying the plane with him, suffering with him, knowing that if he died they would die together, and he had saved them both. And when he had come to her room in Amsterdam and made love to her, her hatred and her love had become intermingled with their two bodies, and somehow time had expanded and contracted and they were back hi their little hotel room hi Paris and Larry was saying to her, "Let's get married; well find some little maire in the country," and the present and the past had exploded dazzlingly into one and Noelle knew then that they were tuneless, had always been timeless, that nothing had really changed and that the depths of her hatred for Larry had come from the heights of her love. If she destroyed him she would be destroying herself, for she had given herself completely to him long ago and nothing could ever change that

It seemed to Noelle that everything she had achieved in her life had been through her hatred. Her father's betrayal had molded and shaped her, annealed and need her, filled her with a hunger for vengeance at could be satisfied with nothing less than a kingdom I her own in which she was all-powerful, in which she I'll never be betrayed again, never be hurt. She had achieved that And now she was ready to give it for this man. Because she knew now that what she always wanted was for Larry to need her, to love And, at last, he did. And that, finally, was her real iom.

Noelle AND
CATHERINE
Athens: 1946

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For Larry and Noelle the next three months was one of
those rare, idyllic periods when everything went right,
a magic time of floating from one wonderful day to the
next, with not the faintest cloud on the horizon. Larry
spent his working hours doing what he loved to do,
flying, and whenever he had time off he went to the
villa in Rafina and spent a day or a weekend or a week
with Noelle. In the beginning Larry had been afraid
that the arrangement would become a millstone that
would drag him down into the kind of domesticity that
he loathed; but each time he saw Noelle, he became
more enchanted and he began to look eagerly forward
to the hours he would spend with her. When she had to
cancel one weekend because of an, unexpected trip with
Demiris, Larry stayed alone at the villa, and he found
himself angry-and
jealous, thinking about Noelle and
Demiris together. When he saw Noelle the following
week, she was surprised and pleased by his eagerness.
"You missed me," she said.
He nodded. "A lot"
"Good."
"How's Demiris?"
She hesitated a moment. "All right"
Larry noticed her hesitation. "What is it?"
"I was thinking of something you said."
"What?"
"You said you hated the feeling of sneaking around
like a criminal. I hate it too. Every moment I was with
Constantin, I wanted to be with you. I once told you,
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him, I want all of yon. I meant it. I don't want to him you with anyone. I
want you to marry me."
s'He stared at her in surprise, caught off guard.
I»; Noelle was watching him. "Do you want to marry
B?" I'tFYou know I do. But how? You keep telling me
: Demiris will do if he finds out about us."
ISfae shook her head. "He wont find out. Not if we're
and plan it properly. He doesn't own me, Larry,
leave him. There's nothing he can do about that
: has too much pride to try to stop me. A month or
later, you'll quit your job. Well go away some-ere,
separately, perhaps to the United States. We
be married there. I have more money than well
need 111 buy you a charter airline, or a flying
tiool or whatever you like."
He stood there listening to what she was saying,
ing what he would be giving up against what he
be gaining. And what would he be giving up? A
job as a pilot The thought of owning his own

les sent a small thrill coursing through him. He'd
his own converted Mitchell. Or maybe the new
that had just come out Four radial engines,
ity-five passengers. And Noelle, yes, he wanted No
Jesus, what was he even hesitating about?
"What about my wife?" he asked.
"Tell her you want a divorce."
"I don't know if she'll give me one."
"Don't ask her," Noelle replied. 'Tell her." There him a final implacable
note hi her voice.
Larry nodded. "All right"
"You wont be sorry, darling. I promise," Noelle

For Catherine time had lost its circadian rhythm; she
" fallen into a tesseract of tune, and day and night
~ into one. Larry was almost never home, and
had long since stopped seeing any of then-friends, was she did not have the
energy to make any more

excuses or to face people. Count Pappas had made half
a dozen attempts to see her, and had finally given up.
She found herself only able to cope "with people secondhand:
by telephone or letter or cable. But face to
face, she turned to stone, and conversations flinted off
her in hopeless, futile sparks. Time brought pain and
people brought pain, and the only surcease Catherine
found was in the wonderful forgetfulfless of liquor. Oh
how it eased the suffering, softened the sharp edge of
rebuffs and gentled down the pitiless sun of reality that
beat down on everyone else.

When Catherine had first come to Athens, she and
William Fraser had written to each other frequently,
swapping news and keeping each other up-to-date on
the activities of their mutual friends and foes. Since
Catherine's problems with Larry had begun, however,
she had not had the heart to write to Fraser. His last
three letters had gone unanswered, and his last letter
had gone unopened. She simply did not have the energy
to cope with anything outside the microcosm of
self-pity in which she was trapped.

One day a cable arrived for Catherine, and it was
still lying on the table unopened a week later, when the
doorbell rang and William Fraser appeared. Catherine
stared at him, unbelievingly. "Bill!" she said, thickly.
"Bill Fraser!"

He started to speak and she saw the excited look in
his eyes turn to something else, something startled and
shocked.

"BiU, darling," she said. "What are you doing here?"

"I had to come to Athens on business," Fraser explained.
"Didn't you get my cable?"

Catherine looked at him, trying to remember. "I
don't know," she said finally.,She led him into the living
room, strewn with old newspapers, filled ashtrays
and plates of half-eaten food. "Sorry the place is such
a mess," she said, waving a vague hand. "I've been
busy."

: Fraser was studying her worriedly. "Are you all
hit, Catherine?"
'"Me? Fantastic. How about a little drink?"
"It's only eleven o'clock in the morning."
i.She nodded. "You're right. You're absolutely right,
1. It's too early to have a drink, and to tell you the
I wouldn't have one except to celebrate your
here. You're the only one in the whole world
could make me have a drink at eleven o'clock in him morning."
Fraser watched with dismay as Catherine staggered him the liquor cabinet and poured a large drink for her
and a smaller one for him.
"Do you like Greek brandy?" she asked as she car-his
drink to him. "I used to hate it, but you get
I to it."
Fraser took his drink and set it down. "Where's
' he asked quietly.
"Larry? Oh, good old Larry's flying around some-He
works for the richest man in the world, you v. Demiris owns everything, even Larry."
.He studied her for a moment "Does Larry know him drink?"
Catherine slammed down her glass and stood sway-in
front of him. "What do you mean, does Larry
I drink?" she demanded indignantly. "Who
; I drink? Just because I want to celebrate seeing an
[friend, don't you start attacking me!"
"Catherine," he began, "I'm . . «"
"You think you can come hi here and accuse me of trying some kind of a drunk?"
"I'm sorry, Catherine," Fraser said painfully, "I
nk you need help."
"Well you're wrong," she retorted. "I don't need any
p. Do you know why? Because I'm--Fm sett--I'm
' she groped for the word and finally gave it
, "I don't need any help." I Fraser watched her for a moment "I have to go to a

he said "Have dinner with
356
now,
me I
conference
tonight."
"OK." She nodded
'^Good, till pick you up at eight"
Catherine watched Bill Fraser as he walked out the door. Then with unsteady steps, she walked into her bedroom and slowly opened the closet door, staring into the mirror hanging on the back of the door. She stood there frozen, unable to believe what she was seeing, sure that the mirror was playing some dreadful trick on her. Inside she was still the pretty little girl adored by her father, still the young college girl standing hi a motel room with Ron Peterson and hearing him say, "My God, Cathy, you're the most beautiful thing I've ever seen," and Bill Fraser holding her in his arms and saying, "You're so beautiful, Catherine," and Larry saying, "Stay this beautiful, Cathy, you're gorgeous," and she looked at the figure in the mirror and croaked aloud, "Who are you?" and the sad, shapeless woman in the mirror began to cry, hopeless, empty tears that coursed down the obscene bloated face.
Hours later the doorbell rang. She heard Bill Eraser's voice calling, "Catherine! Catherine, are you there?" And then the bell rang some < more, and finally the voice stopped and the ringing stopped and Catherine was left alone with the stranger hi the mirror.
At nine o'clock the following morning, Catherine took a taxi to Patission Street. The doctor's name was Nikodes and he was a, large, burly man with a white shaggy mane, a wise face with kind eyes, and an easy, informal manner.
A nurse ushered Catherine hi to his private office and Doctor Nikodes indicated a chair. "Sit down, Mrs. Douglas."
Catherine took a seat, nervous and tense, trying to stop her body from trembling.
"What seems to be your problem?"
She started to answer and then stopped helplessly. God, she thought, where can 1 begin? "I need dp," she said, finally. Her voice was dry and scratchy,
1 she ached for a drink. 1 The doctor was leaning back in his chair watching
a. "How old are you?" one "Twenty-eight" She watched his face as she said ft.
him tried to conceal the look of shock, but she caught ft
ad in some perverse way was pleased by it
"YouVe an American?"
"Yes."
"Are you living in Athens?"
She nodded.
' **How long have you lived here?"

"A thousand years. We moved here before the
iloponnesian War."
The doctor smiled. "I feel that way sometimes too."
fte offered Catherine a cigarette. She reached for it,
; to control the trembling of her fingers. If Doctor
kodes noticed, he said nothing. He lit it for her.
at kind of help do you need, Mrs. Douglas?"
Catherine looked at him helplessly. "I don't know,"
lie whispered. "I don't know."
"Do you feel ill?"
"I am ill. I think I must be very fell. I've become so
jUgly." She knew she was not crying and yet she felt him running down her
cheeks.
"Do you drink, Mrs. Douglas?" the doctor asked

Catherine stared at him in panic, feeling cornered,
eked. "Sometimes."
"How much?"
She took a deep breath. "Not much. It--ft depends."
"Have you had a drink today?" he asked.
"No."
He sat there studying her. "You're not really ugly,
know," he said gently. "You're overweight, your
is bloated and you haven't been taking care of
skin or your hair. Underneath that facade there's

a very attractive young woman."

She burst into tears, and he sat there letting her cry
herself out Dimly over her racking sobs Catherine
heard the buzzer on his desk ring several times, but
the doctor ignored it. The spasm of sobbing finally subsided.
Catherine pulled out a handkerchief and blew
her nose. *Tm sorry," she apologized, "C--can you
help me?"

"That depends entirely on you," Doctor Nikodes replied.
"We don't really know what your problem is
yet."

"Take a look at me," Catherine responded.

He shook his head. "That's not a problem, Mrs.
Douglas, that's a symptom. Forgive me for being blunt,
but if I am to help you, we must be totally honest with
each other. When an attractive young woman lets herself
go as you have, there must be a very strong reason.
Is your husband alive?"

"Holidays and weekends."

He sjudied her. "Do you live with him?"

"When he's home."

"What is his work?"

"He's Constantin Demiris' personal pilot." She saw the reaction on the doctor's face, but whether he was reacting to the name of Demiris or whether he knew something about Larry, she could not tell. "Have you heard of my husband?" she asked.

"No." But he could have been lying. "Do you love your husband, Mrs. Douglas?"

Catherine opened her mouth to answer and then stopped. She knew that what she was going to say was very important, not only to the doctor, but to herself. Yes, she loved her husband and yes, she hated him, and yes, at times she felt such a rage toward him that she knew she was capable of killing him, and yes, at times she was so overwhelmed by a tenderness for him that she knew she would gladly die for him and what was the word that could say all that? Perhaps it was love. "Yes," she said.

1

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I^Does he love you?"
no Catherine thought of the other women hi Larry's life
his unfaithfulness and she thought of the awful
nger hi the mirror last night and she could not
Larry for not wanting her. But who was to say
ich came first? Did the woman in the mirror create
infidelity, or did his infidelity create the woman
mirror? She became aware that her cheeks were
: with tears again.
Catherine shook her head helplessly. "I--I don't
now."
"Have you ever had a nervous breakdown?"
was watching him now, her eyes wary. "No. Do him think I need one?"
He did not smile. He spoke slowly, choosing his
with care. "The human psyche is a delicate , Mrs. Douglas. It can take only so much pain and
sn the pate becomes unbearable, it escapes into bid-recesses
of the mind that we are just beginning to
plore. Your emotions are stretched very tight." He
at her a moment. "I think it is a good thing you get to someone for help."
"I know I'm a little nervous," Catherine said defenly.

"That's why I drink. To relax me."
"No," he said bluntly. "You drink to escape." ? rows got up and walked over to her. "I think there's
Dbably a good deal we can do for you. By *we,' I
him you and I. It will not be simple."
"Tell me what to do."
"To begin with I am going to send you to a clinic for
thorough physical examination. My feeling is that
hey will find nothing basically wrong with you. Next,
are going to stop drinking. Then I am going to put him on a diet All right so far?"
Catherine hesitated, then nodded.
"You are going to enroll in a gymnasium, where you
1 work out regularly to get your body back in shape. > have an excellent physiotherapist who will give you
You will go to a beauty parlor once a week.
All this will take time, Mis. Douglas. You did not get
in tills,condition overnight, and it mil not be changed
overnight" He smiled at her reassuringly. "But I can
promise you that in a few months--even a few
weeks--you will begin to look and feel like a different
woman. When you look hi your mirror, you will feel
proud--and when your husband looks at you, he will
find you attractive."
Catherine stared at him, her heart lifting. It was as
though some unbeatable burden had been removed
from deep inside her, as though she had suddenly been
given a new chance to live.
"You must clearly understand that I can only suggest
this program for you," the doctor was saying. "It
is you who must do it."
"I will," Catherine said fervently. "I promise."
'To stop drinking will be the most difficult part."
"No, it won't," Catherine said. And as she said it,
she knew it was true. The doctor had been right: She
had been drinking in order to escape, Now she had a
goal, she knew where she was going. She was going to
win back Larry. "I won't touch another drop," she said
firmly.
The doctor saw the look on her face and nodded,
satisfied. "I believe you, Mrs. Douglas."
Catherine rose to her feet. It amazed her how
clumsy and awkward her body was, but all that would
change now. "I'd better go out and start buying some
skinny clothes," she smiled.
The doctor wrote something on a card. "This is the
address of the clinic. They will be expecting you. I will
see you again after you have had your examination."
On the street Catherine looked for a taxi, then she
thought, to hell with that. 1 might as well start getting
used to exercise. She began to walk. She passed a shop
window and stopped to stare at her reflection.
She had been so quick to blame Larry for the disintegration

of their marriage without ever questioning
: share of the blame was hers. Why would he want
come home to someone who looked like she did?
slowly and subtly this stranger had crept in with-her
being aware of it She wondered how many
larriages had died in this same way, not with a there certainly hasn't been much of that
tely, Catherine thought, wryly--but with a whimper,
st like good old T.S. Eliot said. Well, that was all in
he past. From now on she would not look back, she
aid only look ahead to the wonderful future.
Catherine had reached the fashionable Salonika disict.
She was walking past a beauty parlor and on a
udden impulse she turned and went inside. The recep-?
room was white marble, large and elegant. A ughty receptionist looked at Catherine disapprovgly
and said, "Yes, may I help you?"
"I want to make an appointment for tomorrow
"trying," Catherine said. "I want everything. The
rks." The name of their top hair stylist suddenly
I into her head. "I want Aleko."
The woman shook her head. "I can give you an apent,
Madame, but you will have to take some-lie
else."
"Listen," Catherine said firmly, "you tell Aleko that I either takes me or I'll go around Athens telling evrone
I'm one of his regular customers."
The woman's eyes opened wide in shocked surprise.
I--I will see what I can do," she said hastily. "Come him at ten hi the morning."
"Thanks," Catherine grinned. 'till be here." And
lie walked out.
Ahead of her she saw a small taverna with a sign in
window that read "MADAME PIRIS--FOR-^TELLING."
It seemed vaguely familiar and
lie suddenly remembered the day that Count Pappas told her a story about Madame Pins. It was some-ling
about a policeman and a lion--but she could not the details. Catherine did not believe in for tune-tellers and yet the impulse to go in was irresistible.
She needed reassurance, someone to confirm her
feeling about her wonderful new future, to tell her that
life was going to be beautiful again, worth living again.
She opened the door and walked inside.
After the bright sunshine it took Catherine several
moments to get used to the cavernous darkness of the
room. She made out a bar in the comer and a dozen
tables and chairs. A tired-looking waiter walked up to
her and addressed her in Greek. <
"Nothing to drink, thank you," Catherine said. She
enjoyed hearing herself say the words and she repeated
them. "Nothing to drink. I want to see Madame Piris.
Is she here?"
The waiter gestured toward an empty table in the

corner of the room and Catherine walked over and sat
down. A few minutes later, she felt someone standing
at her side, and looked up.
The woman was incredibly old and thin, dressed in
black, with a face that had been washed by time into
desiccated angles and planes.
"You asked to see me?" Her English was halting.
"Yes," Catherine said. "I would like a reading,
please."
The woman sat down and raised a hand, and the
waiter came over to the table bearing a cup of thick
black coffee on a small tray. He set it down in front of
Catherine.
"Not for me," Catherine said.'! . . ."
"Drink it," Madame Piris said.
Catherine looked at her in surprise, men picked up
the cup and took a sip of the coffee. It was strong and
bitter. She put down the cup.
"More," the woman said.
Catherine started to protest, then thought, What the
hell. What they lose on the fortune-telling, they make
up on the coffee. She swallowed another mouthful. It
was vile.
1
him more," Madame Piris said.
/ Catherine shrugged and took a final sip. In the bot
of the cop were thick, viscous dregs. Madame Phis
reached over and took the cup from Gather-She
stared into it for a long time, saying nothing,
berine sat there feeling foolish. What's a race, Intel-girl
like me doing in a place like this, watching a old Greek nut staring into an
empty coffee cup?
\ "You'come from a faraway place," the woman said
idenly.
"Bull's eye," Catherine said flippantly. I Madame Piris looked up into her
eyes and there was
nothing in the look of the old woman that chilled ierine.
"Go home."
him Catherine swallowed. "I--I am home." one 'X3o back where you came from."
him "You mean--America?"
"Anywhere. Get away from this place--quickly!"
fsi"Why?M Catherine said, a sense of horror slowly fill
her. "What's wrong?"
|The old woman shook her head. Her voice was
and she was finding it difficult to get the words a. "It is all around you."
tfWhatW
him "Get out!" There was an urgency in the woman's
a high, shrill keening sound like an animal in
Catherine could feel the hair on her scalp begin
>rise.
a "You're frightening me," she moaned. "Please tell) what's wrong."
tíThe old woman shook her head from side to side,
eyes wild. "Go away before it gets you."

Catherine
felt a panic rising hi her. It was difficult
' . her to breathe. "Before what gets me?"
|The old woman's face was contorted with pain and
jr. "Death. It is coming for you." And the woman him and disappeared into the back room.
Catherine sat there, her heart pounding, her hands trembling, and she clasped them tightly together to stop them. She caught the waiter's eye and started to order a drink, but stopped herself. She was not going to let a crazy woman spoil her bright future. She sat there breathing deeply until she had gotten control of herself, and after a long time she rose, picked up her purse and gloves and walked out of the taverna.
Out in the dazdingly bright sunlight Catherine felt better again. She had been foolish to let an old woman frighten her. A horror like that should be arrested instead of being allowed to terrify people. From now on, Catherine told herself, you'll stick to fortune cookies.
She stepped into her apartment and looked at the living room, and it was as though she were seeing it for the first time. It was a dismaying sight Dust was thick everywhere, and articles of clothing were strewn around the room. It was incredible to Catherine that in
her drunken haze she had not even been aware of it.
Well, the first exercise she was going to get was making this place look spic and span. She was starting toward the kitchen when she heard a drawer close in the bedroom.
Her heart leaped in sudden alarm, and she moved cautiously toward the bedroom door.
Larry was in the bedroom. A closed suitcase lay on his bed, and he was finishing packing a second suitcase.
Catherine stood there a moment, watching him. "If those are for the Red Cross," she said, "I already gave."
Larry glanced up. "I'm leaving."
"Another trip for Demiris?"
"No," he said without stopping, "this one's for me. I'm getting out of here."
"Larry . . ."
"There's nothing to discuss."
She moved into the bedroom fighting for self-control. "But--but there is. There's a lot to discuss. I went to see a doctor today, and he told me Fm going to be fine." The words were coming out in a torrent. "Fm no to stop drinking and . . .**
* "Cathy, if him over. I want a divorce."
The words hit her like a series of blows to the stom-She stood there, clamping her jaw tight so that she Id not retch, trying to fight down the bile that rose her throat "Larry," she said, speaking slowly to her voice from trembling, "I don't blame you for way you feel. A lot of it is my fault--maybe most

it--but it's going to be different. I'm going to
-I mean really change." She held out her hand
, "All I ask is a chance." him Larry turned to face her and his dark eyes
were cold him contemptuous. "I'm in love with someone else. All
a from you is a divorce."
'Catherine stood there a long moment, then turned
walked back into the living room and sat on the
ch, looking at a Greek fashion magazine while he
shed packing. She heard Larry's voice saying, "My
Drney will be in touch with you" and then the slam a door. Catherine sat there carefully turning the
of the magazine, and when she had come to the
she set it down neatly in the center of the table,
into the bathroom, opened the medicine chest, OK out a razor blade and slashed her wrists.

Noelle AND
CATHERINE

Athens; 1946

19

There were ghosts in white and they floated around her and then drifted away into space with soft whispers in a language that Catherine could not understand, but she understood that this was Hell and that she had to pay for her sins. They kept her strapped down on the bed, and she supposed that was part of her punishment, and she was glad of the straps because she could feel the earth spinning around through space and she was afraid she was going to fall off the planet. The most diabolical thing they had done was to put all her nerves on the outside of her body so that she felt everything a thousandfold, and it was unbearable. Her body was alive with terrifying and unfamiliar noises. She could hear the blood as it ran through her veins, and it was like a roaring red river moving through her. She heard the strokes of her heart, and it sounded like an enormous drum being pounded by giants. She had no eyelids and the white light poured into her brain, dazzling her with its brightness. All the muscles of her body were alive, in constant, restless motion like a nest of snakes under her skin ready to strike.

Five days after Catherine had been admitted to Evangelismos Hospital, she opened her eyes and found herself in a small, white hospital room. A nurse in a starched white uniform was adjusting her bed, and Dr. Nikodes had a stethoscope to her chest.

"Hey, that's cold," she protested weakly.

He looked at her and said, "Well, well, look who's awake."

Catherine moved her eyes slowly around the room. The light seemed normal and she could no longer hear

roaring of her blood or the pounding of her heart a the dying of her body. I
/'I thought I was in Hell." Her voice was a whisper.
, «You have been."
I She looked at her wrists. For some reason, they were
him "How long have I been here?"
"Five days." [She suddenly remembered the reason for the ban.
"I guess I did a dumb thing," she said.
«Yes."
She squeezed her eyes shut and said, "Fm sorry,"
opened them and it was night and Bill Fraser was
; in a chair beside her bed, watching her. Flowers
I candy were on her bedside table.
"Hi there," he said cheerfully. "You're looking much
utter."
"Better than what?" she asked weakly.
He put his hand over hers. "You really gave me a
e, Catherine."
"Fm so sorry, Bill." Her voice started to choke up,
ad she was afraid that she was going to cry.
"I brought you some flowers and candy. When
u're feeling stronger, I'll bring you some books."
' She looked at him, at his kind strong face, and she
ight: Why don't one love Mm? Why am I in love-v4th man / hate? Why did God have to turn out to be jucho Marx? "How did I get here?" Catherine
ked.
"In an ambulance."
' "I mean--who found me?"
Fraser paused. "I did. I tried phoning you several
and when you didn't answer I got worried and
oke in."
"I suppose I should say thanks," she said, "but to
1 you the truth, I'm not sure yet."
"Do you want to talk about it?"
Catherine shook her head and the movement caused
head to begin throbbing. "No," she said in a small
Eraser nodded. "I have to fty home in the morning.
Fïï keep in touch."
She felt a gentle kiss on her forehead and closed her
eyes to shut out the world and when she opened them
again, she was alone and it was the middle of the night
Early the next morning Larry came to visit her.
Catherine watched him as he walked into the room and
sat down in a chair next to her bed. She had expected
him to be drawn-looking and unhappy, but the truth
was that he looked wonderful, lean and tan and
relaxed. Catherine wished desperately that she had had A chance to comb her hair and put on some lipstick.
"How do you feel, Cathy?" he asked.
"Terrific. Suicide always stimulates me."
"They didn't expect you to pull through."
Tm sorry to have disappointed you."
That's not a very nice thing to say."
"It's true though, isn't it, Larry? You'd have been

rid of me."
"For Christ's sake, I Son't want to be rid of you that way, Catherine. All I want is a divorce."
She looked at him, this bronzed, handsome man she had married, his face a little more dissipated now, his mouth a little harder, his boyish charm worn a bit thin. What was she hanging onto? Seven years of dreams? She had given herself to him with such love and high hopes and she could not bear to let them go, could not bear to admit that she had made a mistake that had turned her life into a barren wasteland. She remembered Bill Fraser and their friends in Washington and the fun they had known. She could not remember the last time she had laughed aloud, or even smiled. But none of that really mattered. In the end the reason that she would not let Larry go was that she still loved him.
He was standing there waiting for an answer. "No," Catherine said. "Ill never give you a divorce."
met Noelle that night at the deserted monas-of Kaissariani in the mountains and reported his ttversation with Catherine.
| Noelle listened intently and asked, "Do you think I will change her mind?"
» Larry shook his head. "Catherine can be as stubborn 'fchell." I* "You must speak to her again."

; And Larry did. For the next three weeks he exhaust-every argument he could think of. He pleaded, ca-raged at her, offered her money, but nothing
[Catherine. She still loved him, and she was sure if he gave himself a chance he could love her air.
^"You're my husband»** she said stubbornly. "You're yet to be my husband until I die."

He repeated what she had said to Noelle.
Noelle nodded. "Yes," she said.
Larry looked at her, puzzled. "Yes, what?"
'They were lying on the beach at the villa, fluffy lite towels spread out beneath them, shielding their rows from the hot sand. The sky was a deep, blazing
, dotted with white patches of cirrus clouds.
"You must get rid of her." She rose to her feet and 3e back to the villa, her long graceful legs moving doothly across the sand. Larry lay there, bewildered, nking that he must have misunderstood her. Surely had not meant that she wanted him to kill Cather him

And then he remembered Helena.

They were having supper on the terrace. "Don't yon
She doesn't deserve to live," Noelle said. "She's day onto you to be vengeful. She's trying to ruin life, our lives, darling."

They lay in bed smoking, the glowing embers of the

cigarette aids winking into the infinity of the mirrors covering the ceiling.

"You would be doing her a favor. She's already tried to kill herself. She wants to die."

"I could never do it, Noelle."

"Couldn't you?"

She stroked his naked leg, gently moving up toward his belly, making small circles with the tips of her fingernails. 'till help you."

He started to open his mouth to protest, but Noelle's two hands had found him, and they began working on him, moving in opposite directions, one softly and slowly, the other one hard and quickly. And Larry moaned and reached for her and put Catherine out of his mind.

Sometime during the night Larry awakened hi a cold sweat. He had dreamed that Noelle had run away and left him. She was lying in bed next to him, and he took her hi his arms and held her close. He lay awake the rest of the night, thinking what it would do to him if he lost her. He was not aware that he had made any decision, but in the morning while Noelle was preparing breakfast, Larry said suddenly, "What if we're caught?"

"they we're clever, we won't be." If she was pleased by his capitulation, she gave no sign of it.

"Noelle," he said earnestly, "every busybody hi Athens knows that Catherine and I don't get along. If anything happened to her, the police would be damned suspicious."

"Of course they would be," Noelle agreed calmly. "That is why everything will be planned very carefully."

She served them both and then sat down and began to eat. Larry pushed his plate away from him, his food untasted. ,

"Isn't it good?" Noelle asked, concerned.

He stared at her, wondering what kind of person she able to enjoy a meal while she was planning the Jer of another woman.

Later, sailing on the boat, they talked about it fur-r, and the more they talked about it, the more of a lity it became, so that what had began as a casual

had been fleshed out with words until it had be a fact.
"It must look like an accident," Noelle said, "so that here will be no police investigation. The police in Athens are very clever."
"What if they should investigate?"
"They won't. The accident will not happen here."
I "Where, then?"
"loannina." She leaned forward and began to talk,
ïe listened to her as she elaborated on her plan, meet-every objection that he raised, improvising brilliantly.
At the end when Noelle finished, Larry had to lit that the plan was flawless. They could really get Jtway with it.

Paul Metaxas was nervous. The Greek pilot's usually ial face was drawn and tense and he could feel a vous tic pulling at the corner of his mouth. He had no appointment with Constantin Demiris, and one not simply barge in on the great man, but Metaxas told the butler it was urgent, and now Paul etaxas found himself standing in the enormous hall-ay of Demiris' villa, staring at him and stammering asily, "I--I am terribly sorry to bother you, Mr. iris." Metaxas surreptitiously wiped the sweaty ilm of his hand against the leg of his flight uniform.
"Has something happened to one of the planes?"
"Oh, no, sir. I--It's--it's a personal matter.*'
Demiris studied him without interest. He made it a Jicy never to get involved in the affairs of his under-ngs. He had secretaries to handle that kind of thing him. He waited for Metaxas to go on.
Paul Metaxas was becoming more nervous by the second. He had spent a lot of sleepless nights before making the decision that had brought him here. What he was doing now was alien to his character and therefore distasteful, but he was a man of fierce loyalty, and his first allegiance was to Constantin Demiris.
"It's about Miss Page," he said, finally.
There was a moment of silence.
"Come in here," Demiris said. He led the pilot into the paneled library and closed the doors. Demiris took a flat Egyptian cigarette out of a platinum case and lit it. He looked at the perspiring Metaxas. "What about Miss Page?" he asked, almost absently.
Metaxas swallowed, wondering if he had made a mistake. If he had estimated the situation correctly, his information would be appreciated, but if he was mistaken . . .
He cursed himself for his rashness in having come here, but he had no choice now but to plunge ahead.
"It's--it's about her and Larry Douglas." He watched Demiris' face, trying to read his expression.
There was not even the faintest nicker of interest.

Christ! Metaxas forced himself to stumble on.
"They--they're living in a beach house together hi
Rafina."
Demiris flicked the ash of the cigarette into a gold,
dome-shaped ashtray. Metaxas had the feeling that he
was about to be dismissed, that he had made a terrible blunder and that it
was going to cost him his job. He
had to convince Demiris that he was telling the truth.
The words began spilling out of nun. "My--my sister
is a housekeeper in one of the villas there. She sees the
two of them on the beach together all the time. She
recognized Miss Page from her pictures hi the paper,
but she didn't think anything about it until a couple of
nights ago when she came down to the airport to have
dinner with me. I introduced her to Larry Douglas
and--well, she told me he was the man Miss Page is
living with."
olive black eyes stared at him, completely
1 of expression.
|>«I--i just thought you would want to know,"
him finished lamely.
IWhen Demiris spoke, his voice was toneless. "What him Page does with her
private life is her own affair. I
sure she would not appreciate anyone's spying on
, I'm

one Metaxas' forehead was beaded with sweat. Jesus
he had gotten the whole situation wrong. And
had only wanted to be loyal. "Believe me, Mr. De
I was only trying to . . ."
"I am sure you thought you were serving my best in.
You were mistaken. Is there anything else?" I "No--no, sir." Metaxas turned
and fled.
Dnstantin Demiris leaned back in his chair, his black eyes fixed on the
ceiling, staring at nothing.

him At time o'clock the following morning Paul Metaxas
eived a call to report to Demiris' mining company in
Congo, where Metaxas was to spend ten days fer-equipment
from Brazzaville to the mine. On a
icsday morning on the third flight his plane touched into the dense, green
jungle. No traces of
sas* body or the wreckage were ever found.

H*wo weeks after Catherine was released from the
pital, Larry came to visit her. It was a Saturday
rig, and Catherine was in the kitchen preparing an
let. The sounds of cooking had prevented her from day the front door open,
and she was not aware of
'him presence until she turned and saw him standing
. the doorway. She jumped involuntarily, and he said,
if I scared you. I just dropped in to see how you I getting along."
Catherine felt her heart beating faster and despised

elf because he could still affect her that way.
!*Tm just fine," she said. She turned and took the
elet out of the pan.

"Smells good," Larry said. "I haven't had time for
dinner. If it isn't too much trouble, would you mind
fixing me one of those?"
She looked at him a long moment, then shrugged.
She made him dinner but she was so unnerved by his
presence that Catherine could not eat a bite. He talked
to her, telling her about a flight he had just made and
an amusing anecdote about one of Demiris' friends. He
was the old Larry, warm and charming and irresistible
as though nothing had gone wrong between them, as
though he had not smashed their lives together.
When dinner was over, Larry helped Catherine wash
and dry the dishes. He stood next to her at the sink,
and his nearness gave her a physical ache. How long
had it been? It did not bear thinking about.
"he really enjoyed it," Larry was saying, with that
easy, boyish grin of his. "Thanks, Cathy."
And that, Catherine thought, was the end of that.

Three days later, the phone rang and it was Larry
phoning from Madrid to say that he was on his way
home and to ask whether she would go out to dinner
with him that evening. Catherine clutched the phone,
listening to his friendly, easy voice, determined not to
go. "I'm free for dinner tonight," she said.

They dined at Tourkolimano at the harbor at Piraeus.
Catherine was barely able to touch her food.
Being with Larry was far too painful a reminder of
other restaurants they had dined in, of too many exciting
evenings together hi the long-dead past, of the love
that was going to last them both a lifetime.
"You're not eating, Cathy. Would you like me to order
something else for you?" he asked, concerned.
"I had a late lunch," she lied. He probably won't
ever ask me out again, Catherine thought, but if he
does 1 will say no.
A few days later Larry called and they had lunch at
a lovely restaurant in a hidden maze off Syntagma

iare. It was called Geroflnikas, the Old Palm Tree,

id was reached through a long, cool passageway with
palm tree in front of it. They had an excellent meal, with Hymettus, the light, dry Greek wine. Larry was at
: most entertaining.
The following Sunday he asked Catherine to fly to
ftenna with him. They had dinner at the Sacher Hotel
id flew back the same night. It had been a wonderful
ning, filled with wine and music and candlelight, but Catherine had the eerie feeling that somehow it didn't
elong to her. It belonged to that other Catherine
Duglas who was long since dead and buried. When they got back to the apartment, she said, "Thank you,
arry, it was a lovely day."
He moved toward her and took her in Ms arms and
tarted to kiss her. Catherine pulled away, her body
igid, her mind filled" with a sudden, unexpected panic.
"No," she said.
"Cathy . . ."
"No!"
He nodded. "All right. I understand."
Her body was trembling. "Do you?" she asked.
"I know how badly I've behaved," Larry said softly,
you'll give me a chance, I'd like to make it up to
du, Cathy."
Good God, she thought. She pressed her lips to-ier,
willing herself not to cry and shook her head, to eyes bright with unshed tears. "It's too late," she
lispered.
And she stood there watching him walk out the
sor.
Catherine heard from Larry again within die week.
le sent flowers with a little note and, after that, min-ature
birds from the various countries to which he
He had obviously gone to a great deal of trouble,
there was an astonishing variety, one hi porcelain, one in jade, one in teak, and she was touched that he
I remembered.
When the phone rang one day and Catherine heard

you

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grow

Larry's voice on the other end saying, "Hey, I found a
wonderful Greek restaurant that serves the best
Chinese food this side of Peking," she laughed and
said, "I can't wait."
And that was when it really began again. Slowly,
tentatively, hesitantly, but it was a beginning. Larry did
not attempt to kiss her again, nor would she have let
him, because Catherine knew that if she let go of her

emotions, if she gave herself wholeheartedly to this man she loved, and he betrayed her again, it would destroy her. Finally and forever. And so she dined with him and laughed with him, but all the time the deep secret personal part of her lay back in reserve, carefully aloof, untouched and untouchable.

They were together almost every night. Some evenings Catherine cooked dinner at home, other nights Larry took her out. Once she mentioned the woman that he had said he was in love with, and he replied tersely, "It's over," and Catherine never brought it up again. She watched closely for signs that Larry was seeing other women, but there were none. He was totally attentive to her, never pressing, never demanding.

It was as though he were doing a penance for the past. And yet Catherine admitted to herself that it was something more than that. He really seemed interested in her as a woman. At night she would stand in front of the mirror, naked, and examine her reflection and try to figure out why. Her face was not bad, the face of a once-pretty girl who had gone through pain, a sadness in the solemn gray eyes that stared back at her.

Her skin was a little puffy and her chin was heavier than it should be, but there was really nothing wrong with the rest of her body that diet and massage could not take care of. She remembered the last time she had thought about this and had wound up with her wrists slashed. A shudder went through her. To hell with Larry, she thought defiantly. If he really wants me, he'll have to take me as I am.

| They had been to a party and Larry had brought her at four and. It had been a marvelous evening, Id Catherine had worn a new dress and looked rather ractive and made people laugh and Larry had been ud of her. When they walked into the apartment, Btherine reached for the light switch and Larry put hand over hers and said, "Wait. I can say this easier the dark." His body was close to hers, not even aching her, yet she could feel the physical waves that lied at her.

"I love you, Cathy," he said. "he never really loved yone else. I want another chance."

He switched on the light then to look at her. She was ading there, rigid and frightened, on the brink of aic. "I know you may not be ready yet, but we could art slowly." He grinned. That darling, boyish grin. /e could start out by holding hands."

He reached out and took her hand. And she pulled to her and they were kissing and his lips were ntle and tender and careful, and hers were demand and wild with all the pent-up longing that had been . hi her body these long, lonely months. And they : in bed together, making love and it was as though

time had passed, and they were on their honey-i.
But it was more than that. The passion was still
t^ere, fresh' and wonderful, but with it an appreciation
what they had together, the knowledge that this
him it would be all right, this time they would not hurt
ch other.
"How would you like to go away on a second honoon?"
Larry was asking.
"Oh, yes, darling. Can we?"
"Sure, I have a vacation coming. Well leave on Sat-ay.
I know a wonderful little place we can go. It's
[led loannina."

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Noelle AND
CATHERINE

Athens: 1946
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The drive to loannina took nine hours. To Catherine,
the scenery seemed almost Biblical, something out of
another age. They drove along the Aegean Sea, past
small whitewashed cottages with crosses on the roofs
and endless fields of fruit trees, lemon and cherry and
apple and orange. Every inch of the land was terraced
and fanned and the windows and roofs of the farmhouses
were painted with gay blue colors as though in
defiance of the hard life being carved out of the rocky
soil. Stands of tall, graceful cypress trees grew in wild
profusion on the steep mountainsides.
"Look, Larry," Catherine exclaimed, "aren't they
beautiful?"
"Not to the Greeks," Larry said.
Catherine looked at him. "What do you mean?"
"They consider them a bad omen. They use them to
decorate cemeteries."
They passed field after field of primitive scarecrows,
with a scrap of cloth tied to each fence.
"They certainly must have gullible crows around
here," Catherine laughed.
They drove through a series of small villages with
impossible names: Mesologian and Agelkastron and
Etolikon and Amfilhoia.
Late in the afternoon they reached the village of
Rion, sloping gently down to the Rio River, where they
were to catch the ferryboat to loannina. Five minutes
later they were sailing toward the island of Epirus

where loannina lay.
get and Larry sat on a bench outside on the
r's upper deck where in the distance ahead of them
saw a large island begin to loom out of the after-cm
mist. It seemed wild to Catherine and somehow a
Je ominous. It had a primitive look to it as though it
I been created for the Greek gods, and mere mortals
: unwelcome intruders. As the boat steamed closer,
ierine could see that the bottom of the island was
with sheer rock that dropped off to the sea be-The
foreboding mountain had a scarred, gashed
t)k where men had gouged a road out of it. Twenty-minutes
later the ferry was docking at the little
mt of Epirus, and a few moments later Catherine
Larry were driving up the mountain toward loan-ia.
Catherine was reading to Larry from the guidebook.
"Nestled high in the Pindus Mountains, in a steep vl surrounded by towering Alps, from a distance Ioina
takes on the shape of a double-headed eagle,
at the claw of the eagle is the bottomless Lake
Qvotis, where excursion boats carry passengers
: its dark green water to the island in the center
' the lake and then on to the distant shores across the he."
"It sounds perfect," Larry said.
They arrived in the late afternoon and drove directly
their hotel, an old beautifully kept one-story build
on a hill high above the town, with a series of guest
lows scattered about the grounds. An old man in
;'uniform came out to greet them. He looked at their
a faces.
'i»i"Honeymooners,*' he said.
I/ Catherine glanced at Larry and smiled. "How did him know?"
"You can always tell," the old man declared. He led
into the lobby where they registered and then i'll them to their bungalow. It consisted of a living
and bedroom, a bathroom and kitchen and a
terrazzo terrace. Over the tops of the cypresses

they had a magnificent view of the village and the lake
below, dark and brooding. It had the unreal beauty of
a picture postcard.
"Ifs not much"--Larry smiled--"bat ifs all yours."
'till take it," Catherine exclaimed.
"Happy?"
She nodded. "I don't remember when he been so
happy." She walked over to him and held him tightly.
"Pont ever let me go," she whispered.
His strong arms were around her, holding her close.
"I won't," he promised-While
Catherine was unpacking, Larry strolled back

to the lobby to talk to the room clerk. 1 "What do people do around here?" Larry asked.
"Everything," the clerk said proudly. "In the hotel we have a health spa. Around the village there is hiking, fishing, swimming, boating."
"How deep is the lake?" Larry inquired casually.
The clerk shrugged. "No one knows, sir. It is a volcanic lake. It is bottomless."
Larry nodded thoughtfully. "What about the caves near here?" he asked.
"Ahl The Caves of Perama. They are only a few miles from here."
"Have they been explored?"
"A few of them. Some are still closed."
"I see," said Larry.
The clerk continued. "If you like mountain climbing, I suggest Mount Tzoumerka. If Mrs. Douglas is not afraid of heights."
"No," smiled Larry. "She's quite an expert climber."
"Then she will enjoy it You're lucky with the weather. We've been expecting the meltemi, but it hasn't come. Now it probably wont"
"What*s the metiemi?" Larry asked.
"Ifs a terrible wind that blows down from the north. I suppose it is like your hurricane. When it comes, everyone stays indoors. In Athens, even ocean liners are forbidden to leave the harbor."
Tm glad we missed it," Larry said.

When Larry returned to the bungalow, he suggested
> Catherine that they go down to the village for dinner.
They took the steep, rocky footpath that led down lie slope to the edge of the village. loannina consisted a main street, King George Avenue, with two or smaller streets on both sides of it. Off of those a warren of tiny dirt roads radiated out to and apartments. The buildings were old and eatherbeaten, made of stone carried down by cart him the mountains.
The middle of King George Avenue was sectioned by ropes, so that cars drove on the left side of the and pedestrians were free to walk on the right

"They should try that on Pennsylvania Avenue," iGatherine said.
At the town square was a charming little park with a high tower with a large,

lighted clock hi it. A street need with huge Platanus trees ran down to the lake. It
|appeared to Catherine that all the streets in the village
I to the water. It seemed to her that there was some-ng
frightening about the lake. It had a strange,
Ibrooding quality. All along the shores grew clumps of
Mall reeds that reached out like greedy fingers, as
I though waiting for someone.
Catherine and Larry walked down the colorful little
Ishopping center, with shops crowded together on each
I «ide. There was a jewelry store and next to it a bakery
| shop, an open air butcher shop, a tavern, a shoe store.
Idren stood outside a barber shop, silently watching
customer getting shaved. Catherine thought they
him the most beautiful children she had ever seen.
In the past, Catherine had talked to Larry about having a baby, but he had always dismissed the idea,
that he was not ready to settle down. Now, never, he might feel differently. Catherine glanced at
as he walked at her side, taller than the other men,

fj

looking like a Greek god, and she resolved that she would discuss it with him before they left After all, it was their honeymoon.

They passed a movie theater, the Palladian. Two very old American pictures were playing. They stopped to look at the display posters.

"We're in luck," Catherine joked. "South of Panama with Roger Pryor and Virginia Vale, and Mr. DA* in The Carter Case"

"Never even heard of them," Larry snorted. "This theater must be older than it looks."

They ate mousaka in the square, seated outdoors under an unbelievable full moon and then went back to the hotel and made love. It had been a perfect day.

In the morning Catherine and Larry drove around the lovely countryside, exploring the narrow road that wound along the lake, running along the rocky coast for a few miles, then drunkenly weaving its way back up again into the hills. Stone houses were perched on the edge of the steep mountainsides. High above the shore set back in the woods they caught a glimpse of a

huge whitewashed building that looked like an ancient castle.

"What's that?" Catherine asked.

"I have no idea," Larry said.

"Lets find out"

"AH right."

Larry swung the car onto the dirt track that led to the building, through a meadow, past grazing goats and a shepherd who stared at them as they drove by. They pulled up in front of the deserted entrance to die building. Up close it looked like an old ruined fortress.

"It must be a leftover ogre's castle," Catherine said. "Probably out of the Brothers Grimm."

"Do you really want to find out?" Larry asked.

"Sure. We may be just in time to rescue a maiden in distress."

Larry gave Catherine a quick, strange look.

They got out of the car and walked up to the ma»

rive wooden door with a huge iron knocker fastened to ' the center. Larry hit it several times and they waited. : There were no sounds except the buzz of summer insects in the meadow and die whisper of the breeze through the grass.

"I guess no one's home," Larry said.

"They're probably getting rid of bodies," Catherine whispered.

Suddenly the huge door began to creak open slowly. him A nun dressed in black stood facing them.

It caught Catherine off guard. "I--I'm sorry," she said. "We didn't know what this place was. There's no I sign or anything."

The nun regarded the two of them for a moment, [' then gestured for them to enter. They stepped through '. the doorway and found themselves in a large courtyard that was the center of a compound. There was a , strangely still atmosphere, and Catherine suddenly re* ; alized what was missing: the sound of human voices.

She turned to the Sister and said, "What place is pfhis?"
The Sister silently shook her head and motioned for ; them to wait there. They watched as she turned and I walked toward an old stone building at the end of the I compound.
"She's gone to get Bela Lugosi," Catherine whispered.
Beyond the building toward a promontory that rose above the sea, they could see a cemetery framed by [rows of tall cypress trees.
"This place gives me the creeps," Larry said.
"It's as though we've stumbled into another century," Catherine replied. Unconsciously they were whispering, as though afraid to disturb the heavy Isilence. Through the window of the main building they I could see inquisitive faces staring out at them, all I women, all of them dressed in black.
"It's some kind of religious nuthouse," Larry de41

A tall, thin woman emerged from the building and started walking briskly toward them. She wore a nun's habit and had a pleasant, friendly face.

"I am Sister Theresa," she said. "May I help you?"

"We were just passing by," Catherine said, "and we were curious about this place." She looked at the faces peering from the windows. "We didn't mean to disturb you."

"We are not honored with many visitors," Sister Theresa said. "We have almost no contact with the outside world. We are an Order of Carmelite nuns. We have taken a vow of silence."

"For how long?" Larry asked.

"Gia panta--for the rest of our lives. I am the only one here permitted to speak and then only when necessary."

Catherine gazed around at the large, silent courtyard and repressed a shudder. "Does no one ever leave here?"

Sister Theresa smiled. "No. There is no reason to. Our life is within these walls."

"Forgive us for troubling you," Catherine said.

The Sister nodded. "Not at all. Go with God."

As Catherine and Larry walked out, the huge gate slowly swung closed behind them. Catherine turned to look back at it It was like a prison. But somehow this seemed worse. Perhaps because it was a voluntary penance, a waste, and Catherine thought of the young women she had seen from the window, walled up here, shut away from the world for the rest of their lives, living in the deep permanent silence of the grave. She knew she would never forget this place.

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Noelle AND
CATHERINE
Athens: 1946

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rly the following morning Larry went down to the
He asked Catherine to join him, but she de-telling
him that she was going to sleep late.
tie moment he left, Catherine got out of bed, huredly
dressed and went over to the hotel gymnasium
bich she had investigated the day before. The instruc-a
Greek Amazon, told her to strip, then exam-tied
her body critically.
"You have been lazy, lazy," she scolded Catherine, what was a good body. If you are willing to work Theou thellondos--God willing--it can be good gain."
"I'm willing," said Catherine. "Let's see how God
him up."
Under the tutelage of the Amazon Catherine worked
every day, going through the agonies of body-con-;
massage, a Spartan diet and grueling exercises,
kept all this from Larry, but by the end of the
day the change in her was noticeable enough
him to comment on it
'This place really agrees with you," he said. "You OK like a different girl."
"I am a different girl," Catherine replied, suddenly

On Sunday morning Catherine went to church. She
never seen a Greek Orthodox mass. In a village
small as loannina she had expected to find a little
atry church, but to her surprise she walked into a
richly decorated church with beautiful elaborate

(
him
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carvings on the walls and ceiling and a marble floor.

In front of the altar were a dozen enormous silver candelabras, and around the room were frescoes of Biblical paintings. The priest was thin and swarthy with a black beard. He wore an elaborate gold and red robe and a tall black hat, and he stood on what looked to Catherine like a sedan chair on a raised platform. Along the wall were individual wooden benches and next to them a row of wooden chairs. The men sat in the front of the church and the women in the rear. / guess the men get to Heaven first, Catherine thought.
A chanting began in Greek, and the priest stepped down from the platform and moved to the altar. A red curtain parted and behind it was a lavishly robed, white-bearded patriarch. On a table in front of him stood a symbolical jeweled hat and a gold cross. The old man lit three candles tied together, representing, Catherine supposed, the Holy Trinity, and handed them to the priest. V
The mass lasted for one hour, and Catherine sat there savoring the sights and sounds and thinking about how lucky she was and she bowed her head and gave a prayer of gratitude.
The next morning Catherine and Larry were having breakfast on their bungalow terrace that overlooked the lake. It was a perfect day. The sun was shining down, and a lazy breeze was coming off the water. A pleasant young waiter had brought the food. Catherine was wearing a negligee and when the waiter came in, Larry had put his arms around Catherine and kissed her on the neck. "What a great night," Larry murmured. The waiter had stifled a smile and discreetly retreated. Catherine had been a little embarrassed. It was unlike Larry to be affectionate in front of strangers. He really has changed, Catherine thought It seemed that every time a maid or bellboy came into the room, Larry would put his arm around Catherine and show his affection, as though he wanted the whole world to ' how much he loved her. Catherine found it very
.
"I have a great morning planned for us," Larry said, pointed to the east, where they could see a giant towering into the sky. "We're going to climb a Tzoumerka."
"I have a rule," Catherine declared. "I never climb I can't spell."
"Come on, they say there's a fantastic view from up

Catherine saw that Larry was serious. She looked up mountain again. It looked as though it went lit up. "Climbing's not what I do best, darling," ssaid.
him an easy hike. Paths all the way up." He hesi-"If you don't want to go with me, I can go get." There was sharp disappointment in his voice,

would be so simple to say no, so simple to just sit
and enjoy the day. The temptation was almost
erpowering. But Larry wanted her with him. That him enough for Catherine.
"OK. I'll see if I can find an alpine hat," she said. I'll look of such
relief came over Larry's face that ierine was glad she had decided to go.
Besides it
it be interesting.
She had never climbed a mountain before.

They drove to a meadow at the edge of the village
the mountain trail began and parked the car.
was a small food stand at the side of the road,
Larry bought some sandwiches, fruit, candy bars
1 a large thermos of coffee.
"they it's nice up there," he told the proprietor, "my
ride and I may want to spend the night." He gave I a hug, and the proprietor
grinned.

Catherine and Larry walked up to the beginning of him trail. There were
really two trails, branching off in
directions. Catherine admitted to herself that

it looked like an easy climb. The paths seemed wide
and not too steep. When she turned her head to gaze at
the top of the mountain, it seemed grim and forbidding,
but then they would not be going that high. They
would climb a little way up and have a picnic.

"This way," Larry said, and he led Catherine toward
the path going to the left. As they started to climb, the
Greek proprietor watched them with concern. Should
he run after them and .tell them they had taken the
wrong path? The one they were on was dangerous, for
expert cumbers only. At that moment some customers
came up to the stand and the proprietor put the two
Americans out of his mind.

The sun was hot, but as they climbed higher, the
breezes grew cooler, and Catherine thought that the
combination of the two was delicious. It was a beautiful
day and she was with the man she loved. From time
to time Catherine glanced down and was amazed at
how high they had already climbed. The air seemed to
be getting thinner, and breathing was becoming more
difficult She had been walking behind Larry, for the
path was now too narrow to permit them to walk side
by side. She wondered when they were going to stop
and have their picnic.

Larry became aware that Catherine was straggling behind and he stopped to wait for her.

"Sorry," Catherine gasped. "The altitude is beginning to get to me a little." She looked down. "It's going to take a long time to get down."

"No, it wont," Larry replied. He turned and started up the narrow path again. Catherine looked after him, sighed and doggedly started up the trail.

"I should have married a chess player," she called after him. Larry made no response.

He had come to a sudden, sharp turn in the path, and in front of him was a small wooden bridge with a single rope for a handhold that had been built across a deep gorge. The bridge was swaying hi the wind and did not look secure enough to carry the weight of a

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Larry put one foot on a rotting wooden plank of bridge and it started to sink with his weight, then He looked down. The gorge was about one thou-ad feet below. Larry started across, carefully testing him step, and heard Catherine's voice, "Larry!"
He turned. She had reached the foot of the bridge.
"We're not going to cross on that, are we?" Cathere asked. "That wouldn't hold a catr "We are unless you can fly."
"But it doesn't look safe."
"People cross it every day." Larry turned and start-moving across it again, leaving Catherine standing
: the foot of the bridge.
Catherine stepped on the bridge, and it began to vi-ate.
She looked down at the deep gorge, and fear be-to fill her. This was no longer fun; it was danger-Catherine looked ahead and saw that Larry bad
aost reached the other side. She gritted her teeth,
t>bed the rope and started walking across, the bridge
raying with every step. On the other side Larry had opened to watch her.
Catherine was moving slowly,
one hand tightly on the rope, trying not to
sk down at the abyss below. Larry could see the fear on her face. When Catherine reached Larry's
she was shivering, either from terror or from the wind that was beginning to sweep across the
1 mountain tops.
- Catherine said, "I don't think I'm cut out to be a
ntain climber. Could we go back now, darling?"

* Larry looked at her in surprise. "We haven't even
him the view yet, Cathy." I've seen enough to last me a lifetime."
< He put his arms on hers. "TeH you what," he smiled,
ahead is a nice quiet place for our picnic. Well him there. How's that?"
f'Catherine nodded reluctantly. "All right" a «That's my girl."
a gave her a brief smile, then turned and started
the path again, Catherine following behind him.
Catherine had to admit that the view of the village and
the valley far below was breathtaking, a peaceful idyllic
scene out of a Currier & Ives postcard. She was really
glad that she had come. It had been a long time
since she had seen Larry so exuberant He seemed to
be possessed by a sense of excitement that kept growing
as they climbed higher. His face was flushed, and he
chattered on about trivia as though he had to keep
talking to release some of his nervous energy. Everything
seemed to excite him: the climb, the view, the
flowers along the path. Each thing seemed to take on
an extraordinary importance as though his senses had
somehow been stimulated beyond normal. He was
climbing effortlessly, not even out of breath, while the
increasingly rarefied air was making Catherine pant.
Her legs were beginning to feel like lead. Her breath
was coming in labored gasps now. She had no idea how
long they had been climbing, but when she looked
down, the village was a tiny miniature far below. It
seemed to Catherine that the path was getting steeper
and narrower. It wound along the edge of a precipice
and Catherine hugged the side of the,mountain as
closely as she could. Larry had said that it was an easy
climb. For a mountain goat, Catherine thought. The
trail was almost nonexistent, and there was no sign
that anyone else had used it. The flowers had thinned
out and the only vegetation was moss and a strange-looking,
brownish weed that seemed to be growing out
of the stones. Catherine was not sure how much longer
she could keep climbing. As they rounded a sharp turn,
the path suddenly dropped away and a dizzying abyss
appeared below her feet.
"Larry!" It was a scream.
He was at Catherine's side instantly. He grabbed her
arm and pulled her back, guiding her over the rocks to
where the path resumed. Catherine's heart was pounding
wildly. / must be crazy, she thought. I'm too old to
go on safari. The altitude and the exertion had made
her dizzy and her head was swimming. She turned to
to Larry, and above him around the next torn, I saw the top of the mountain.
They had arrived.

Catherine lay there on the flat ground getting her
ngth back, feeling the cool breeze teasing at her a. The terror had subsided.
There was nothing more him fear now. Larry had said the way down was easy.
a sat down beside her.

; "Feeling better?" he asked,
he nodded. "Yes." Her heart had stopped pounding
she was beginning to breathe normally again. She OK a deep breath and smiled up at him.
"The hard part's finished, isn't it?" Catherine asked.
Larry looked at her a long moment. Then he said,
Tes. It's finished, Cathy."
I Catherine raised herself up on one elbow. A wooden
ervation platform had been set up on the small
There was an old railing around the edge,
which there was a spectacular view of the dizg
panorama below. A dozen feet away Catherine
see the path leading down the other side of the
ntain.
Larry, it is beautiful," Catherine said. "I feel I Magellan." She smiled at him, but Larry was look-away
and Catherine realized that he wasn't listen-to
her. He seemed preoccupied--tense, as though
were worried about something. Catherine glanced
said, "Look!" A fluffy white cloud was drifting
them, pushed along by the brisk mountain
"It's coming this way. I've never stood in the
; before. It must be like being favour Heaven."
ry watched as Catherine scrambled to her feet
moved toward the edge of the cliff to the rickety
railing. Larry leaned forward on his elbows,
sly thoughtful, watching the cloud as it moved
Catherine. It had almost reached her, was
„' to envelop her.
Tm going to stand in it," she called, "and let it go
: through met"

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> I'll

An instant later Catherine was lost in the swirling
gray mist.
Quietly, Larry rose to his feet. He stood there a moment,
stock still, then began to move silently toward
her. In seconds he was immersed in the fog. He
stopped, not sore exactly where she was. Then ahead
of him he heard her voice calling, "Oh, Larry, this is
wonderful! Come and join me." He started moving
slowly forward toward the sound of her voice, muffled
by the cloud. "It's like a soft rain," she cried. "Can you
feel it?" Her voice was closer now, only a few feet
ahead of him. He took another step forward, his hands
outstretched, groping for her.
"Larry! Where are you?"
He could make out her figure now, wraithlike in the
mist, just in front of him at the very edge of the cliff.
His hands reached out toward her and at that moment

the cloud blew past them, and she turned and they were facing each other, no more than three feet apart. She took a step back in surprise, so that her right foot was at the very edge of the cliff. "Oh! You startled me," she exclaimed.
Larry took another step toward her, smiling reassuringly, and he reached out for her with Ms two hands, and at that moment a loud voice said, 'Tor Chrissakes, we got bigger mountains than this in Denver!"
Larry swung around in shock, his face white, A group of tourists led by a Greek guide emerged from the far path around the other face of the mountain.
The guide stopped as he saw Catherine and Larry.
"Good morning," he said hi surprise. "You must have climbed the east slope."
"Yes," Larry said tightly.
The guide shook his head. "They're crazy. They should have told you that that is the dangerous way. The other slope is much easier."
"Ill remember that next tone," Larry said. His voice was hoarse.
The excitement that Catherine had noticed seemed
393
a to have gone out of him, as though a switch had been | suddenly turned off.
"Let's get the hell out of here," Larry said.
"But--we just got here. Is anything wrong?"
"No," he snapped. "I just hate mob scenes."
They took the easy path back, and on the way down I'Larry did not speak at all. It was as though he was I filled with an icy rage and Catherine could not imagc why. She was sure she had not said or done any* ; to offend him. It had been when the other people I appeared that his manner had changed so abruptly.
iSuddenly Catherine thought she guessed the reason for íhis mood, and smiled. He had wanted to make love to I her in the cloud! That was why he bad started moving ftoward her with his arms outstretched. And his plans been spoiled by the group of tourists. She almost ughed aloud with joy. She watched Larry as he I down the trail ahead of her, and she was infused nth a feeling of warmth. I'U make it up to him when a get back to the hotel, she promised herself.
But when they returned to their bungalow, and Catherine put her arms around him and started to kiss air, Larry told her that he was tired.
At three o'clock in the morning Catherine lay in , too excited to sleep. It had been a long day and a day one. She thought of the mountain path and lie shaky bridge and the climb up the face of the rock, ad finally she fell asleep.

The following morning Larry went to talk to the.re-i
clerk.
"Those caves you mentioned the other day," Larry
egan. '
"Ah, yes," the clerk replied. "The Caves of Perama.
fery colorful. Very interesting. You must not miss
hem."
"I guess I'll have to see them," Larry said lightly. "I
at care for caves much, but my wife heard about
and she's been after me to take her there. She him that kind of thing."

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"I am certain you will both enjoy it, Mr. Douglas.
Just be sure to hire a guide."
"Do I need one?" Larry asked.
The clerk nodded. "It is advisable. There have been
several tragedies there, people getting lost." He lowered
his voice. "One young couple has not been found
to this day."
"If it's so dangerous," Larry asked, "why do they allow
people in?"
"It is only the new section that is dangerous," the
clerk explained. "It has not been explored yet and
there are no lights. But with a guide you will not have
to worry."
"What time do they close the caves?"
"At six o'clock."
Larry found Catherine outside, reclining under a
giant oxya tree, the beautiful Greek oak, reading.
"How's the book?" he asked.
"Put-downable."
He hunched beside her. "The hotel clerk told me
about some caves near here."
Catherine looked up, faintly apprehensive. "Caves?"
"He said it's a must. All the honeymooners go there.
You make a wish inside, and it comes true." His voice
was boyish and eager. "How about it?"
Catherine hesitated a moment, thinking how like a
little boy Larry really was. "If you would like it," she
said.
He smiled. "Great. Well go after lunch. You go
ahead and read. I have to drive into town and pick up
a few things."
"Would you like me to come with you?" '
"No," he said easily, "I'll be right back. You take it
easy."
She nodded. "All right."
He turned and left

Li town Larry found a small general store that was
able to supply him with a pocket flashlight, some fresh

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him and a ball of twine.
"Are you staying op at the hotel?" the shopkeeper
| asked as he counted out Larry's change.
"No," Larry said. "Just passing through on my way
|to Athens."
"I'd be careful if I was you," the man advised.
Larry looked up at him sharply. "Of what?"
"There's a storm coming up. You can hear the sheep
fcrying."
Larry returned to the hotel at three o'clock. At four
| o'clock, Larry and Catherine left for the caves. A trou-I
bled wind had sprung up, and to the north large thunderheads
were starting to form, erasing the sun from
I the sky.

The Caves of Perama lie thirty kilometers east of lo|annina.
Over the centuries tremendous stalagmites and
talactites have formed into the shapes of animals and
palaces and jewels, and the caves have become an imt
tourist attraction.
When Catherine and Larry arrived at the caves, it him five o'clock, one hour
before closing. Larry bought him tickets and a pamphlet at the ticket booth. A
shably
dressed guide came up and offered his services.
"Only fifty drachmas," he intoned, "and I will give him the best guided
tour."
"We don't need a guide," Larry said, curtly.
Catherine looked at him, surprised by his sharp the.
He took Catherine's arm. "Come on."
"Are you sure we shouldn't have a guide?"
"What for? It's a racket. All we do is go inside and OK at the cave. The
pamphlet will tell us anything we
1 to know."
"All right," Catherine said agreeably.
The entrance to the cave was larger than she had ex
brightly lit with flood lamps and filled with mill
tourists. The walls and roof of the cave seemed to
crammed with heroic figures sculpted out of the

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locks: birds and giants and flowers and crowns.
"It's fantastic," Catherine exclaimed. She studied the
pamphlet. "No one knows how old it is."

Her voice sounded hollow, reverberating against the
rock ceiling. Over their heads, stalactites hung down. A
tunnel carved into the rock led to a second smaller
room that was lit by naked bulbs wired near the ceiling
of the cave. There were more fanciful figures in here, a
wild profligate display of nature's art At the far end of
the cave was a printed sign that read: Danger: Keep
Away.
Beyond the sign was the entrance to a yawning black
cavern. Casually Larry walked over to it and looked
around. Catherine was studying a carving near the entrance.
Larry took the sign and tossed it to one side.
He walked back to Catherine.
"It's damp in here," she said. "Shall we leave?"
"No." Larry's tone was firm.
She looked at him hi surprise.
"There's more to see," Larry explained. "The-hotel
clerk told me that the most interesting part is the new
section. He said we mustn't miss it"
"Where is it?" Catherine asked.
"Over there." Larry took her arm and they walked
toward the rear of the cave and stood in front of the
gaping black chasm.
"We can't go in there," Catherine said. "If him dark."
Larry patted her arm. "Not to worry. He told me to
bring a flashlight.'' He produced it from his pocket.
"And--voilá--see?" He turned it on, and its narrow
beam lit up a long dark corridor of ancient rock.
Catherine stood there, staring at the tunnel. "It
looks so big," she said uncertainly. "Are you sure it's
safe?"
"Of course," Larry replied. "They bring schoolchildren
here."
Catherine still hesitated, wishing they could stay
with the other tourists. Somehow this seemed dangerous
to her.

"All right," she said.
They started into the passage. They had traveled
a few feet when the circle of light from the main
behind them was swallowed up in the blackness,
tie passage made an abrupt turn to the left and then
arved to the right. They were alone in a cold, timeless
aeval world. In the beam of Larry's flashlight Catherine caught a glimpse of his face in the reflection
light and she saw that look of animation again. It
the same way he had looked on the mountain, ierine tightened her grip on his arm.
Ahead of them the tunnel forked. Catherine could
the rough stone on the low ceiling as it split off in
ate directions. She thought of Theseus and the

aotaur in the cave, and she wondered whether they going to bump into them. She opened her mouth suggest that they turn back, but before she could , Larry said, "We go to the left."
She looked at him and said in what she hoped was a voice, "Darling, don't you think we should start black? It's getting late. The caves will be closing."
"They're open until nine," Larry replied. "There's one particular cave I want to find. They just excavated
It's supposed to be really fantastic." He started to nove forward.
Catherine hesitated, casting about for an excuse not go farther. After all why shouldn't they go explorg? Larry was enjoying it. If that was what it took to him happy, she would become (he world's itest--what was the word?--spelunker.
Larry had stopped and was waiting for her. "Com-ng?" he asked impatiently.
She tried to sound enthusiastic. "Yes. Just don't lose get," she said.
Larry did not reply. They took the fork that hied to the left and began walking, careful of the lall stones that slipped under their feet. Larry reached nto his pocket, and a moment later Catherine heard ; fall to the ground. Larry kept walking.

"Did you drop something?" Catherine asked. "I thought I heard--"

"I kicked a stone," he said. "Let's walk faster." And they moved ahead, Catherine unaware that behind them a ball of twine was unwinding.

The ceiling of the cave seemed to be lower here and the walls damper and--Catherine laughed at herself for thinking it--ominous. It was as though the tunnel was beginning to close in on them, threatening and maleficent. "I don't think this place likes us," Catherine said.

"Don't be ridiculous, Cathy; it's just a cave."

"Why do you suppose we're the only ones here?"

Larry hesitated. "Not many people know about this section."

They walked on and on until Catherine began to lose all sense of time and place.

The passage was narrowing again, and the rocks on

the sides tore at them with sharp, unexpected protuberances.

"How much farther do you think it is?" Catherine asked. "We must be getting near China."

"It's not far now."

When they spoke, their voices sounded muffled and hollow, like a series of continuous dying echoes.

It was getting cold now, but it was a damp, clammy cold. Catherine shivered. Ahead the beam of the flashlight caught another bifurcation of the passage. They walked up to it and stopped. The tunnel running to the right seemed smaller than the one to the left.

"They should put up neon road signs," Catherine said. "We've probably gone too far."

"No," Larry said. "I'm sure it's the one on the right."

"I'm really getting chilly, darling," she said. "Let's go back now."

He turned to look at her. "We're almost there, Cathy." He squeezed her arm. "I'll warm you up when we get back to our bungalow." He saw the reluctance

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on her face. till tell you what--if we haven't found the place in the next two minutes, well turn around and go home. OK?"
Catherine felt her heart lighten. "OK," she said thankfully.
"Come on."
They turned down the tunnel to the right, the beam of the flashlight making an eerie, wavering pattern on the gray rock ahead. Catherine glanced back over her shoulder and behind her was complete blackness. It was as though the little flashlight was carving brightness out of the Stygian gloom, moving it forward a few feet at a time, encapsulating them in its tiny womb of ; light. Larry stopped suddenly.
"Damn!" he said.
"What's the matter?"
"I think we took the wrong turn back there."
Catherine nodded. "All right. Let's go back."
"Let me make sure. You stay here."
She looked at him in surprise. "Where are you f,;going?"
"Just a few feet. Back to that entrance." His voice

^sounded strained and unnatural.
"I'll come with you."
"I can do it faster alone, Catherine. I just want to him check the fork where we made the last turn." He
f'sounded impatient "I'll be back in ten seconds."
"All right," she said, uneasily.
Catherine stood there watching as Larry turned
tray from her and walked back into the dark from
I which they had come, enclosed in a halo of light like a
I moving angel in the bowels of the earth. A moment
ter the light disappeared, and she was plunged into
lie deepest blackness she had ever known. She stood
acre, shivering, counting off the seconds in her mind. a And then the minutes.
Larry did not return.

Catherine waited, feeling the blackness lapping

around her like malicious invisible waves. She called
Out, "Larry?" and her voice was hoarse and uncertain,
and she cleared her throat and tried again louder.
"Larry?" She could hear the sound dying a few feet
away from her, murdered by the darkness. It was as
though nothing could live in this place, and Catherine
began to feel the first tendrils of terror. Of course
Larry will be right back, she told herself. All I have to
do is stay where / am and remain calm.
The black minutes dragged by, and she began to
face the fact that something had gone terribly wrong.
Larry could have had an accident, he could have
slipped on the loose stones and hit his head on the sharp
sides of the cave. Perhaps at this moment he was lying
just a few feet away from her, bleeding to death. Or
perhaps he was lost. His flashlight could have gone out
and he might be somewhere hi the bowels of this cave
trapped, as she was trapped.
A feeling of suffocation began to close in on Catherine,
choking her, filling her with a mindless panic. She
turned and began to walk slowly hi the direction from
which she had come. The tunnel was narrow, and if
Larry was lying on the ground, helpless and hurt, she
had a good chance of finding him. Soon she would
come to the place where the passage had divided. She
moved cautiously, the loose stones rolling beneath her
feet. She thought she heard a distant sound and
stopped to listen. Larry? It was gone, and she began to
move again, and then she heard it once more. It was a
whining sound, as though someone were running a
tape recorder. There was someone down here!
Catherine yelled aloud and then listened as the

sound of her voice drowned favour the silence. There it was again! The whirring noise. It was coming this way. It grew louder, racing toward her favour a great screaming rush of wind. It was getting closer and closer. Suddenly it leaped on her favour the dark; cold and clammy skin brushed against her cheeks and kissed her h'ps and she felt something crawling on her head and sharp claws favour
^
hair and her face was smothered by the mad
; of wings of some nameless honor attacking her a the blackness.
She fainted.

She was lying on a sharp spike of stone and the dis| comfort of it brought her back to consciousness. Her
| cheek was warm and sticky, and it was a minute before
: Catherine realized that it was her blood. She remem[
bered the wings and the claws that had attacked her in
[the dark and she began to shiver.
There were bats in the cave.
She tried to recall what she knew about bats. She
I had read somewhere that they were flying rats and that
| they congregated by the thousands. The only other in-aation
she could conjure up from her memory was
| that there were vampire bats, and she quickly dropped
thought. Reluctantly Catherine sat up, the palms
| Of her hands stinging from being scraped on the sharp
I stones.
You can't just sit here, she told herself. You've got
I to get up and do something. Painfully she dragged her-f
self to her feet She had lost a shoe somehow and her
[dress was torn, but Larry would buy her a new one tomorrow.
She pictured the two of them going into a lit-I
tie shop in the village, laughing and happy and buying a a white summer dress
for her, but somehow the dress
I became a shroud and her mind began to fill with panic
iagain. She must keep thinking about tomorrow, not the
fnightmare she was engulfed hi now. She must keep
[(Walking. But which way? She was turned around. If
te walked the wrong way, she would be going deeper
the cave, and yet she knew she could not stay
Catherine tried to estimate how much time had
since they had entered the cave. It must have
an hour, possibly two. There was no way of
nowing how long she had been unconscious. Surely
would be looking for Larry and her. But what if
one missed them? There was no check on who

went in or oat of the caves. She could be down here
forever.
She took off her other shoe and began to Walk, taking

slow, careful steps, holding her burning hands out
to avoid bumping into the rough sides of the tunnel. The longest journey
begins with but a single step, Catherine told herself. The Chinese said that and
look
how smart they are. They invented firecrackers and
chop saey, and they were too clever to get caught in
some dark hole in the ground where no one could find
them. If I keep walking, I'm going to bump into Larry
or some tourists and we'll go back to the hotel and
have a drink and laugh about all this. All 1 have to do
is keep walking.
She stopped suddenly. In the distance she could hear the whining sound again,
moving toward her like some
ghostly, phantom express train, and her body began to
tremble uncontrollably, and she began to scream. An
instant later, they were on her, hundreds of them,
swarming over her, beating at her with their cold,
clammy wings and smothering her with their furry rodent
bodies in a nightmare of unspeakable horror.
The last thing she remembered before losing consciousness
was calling Larry's name.

She was lying on the cold, damp floor of the cave.
Her eyes were closed, but her mind had suddenly
awakened, and she thought, Larry wants to kill me. It
was as though her subconscious had put the idea there
intact. In a series of kaleidoscopic Sashes she heard
Larry saying, Fm in love with someone else . . . I
want a divorce . . . and Larry moving toward her
through the cloud on the mountaintop, his hands
reaching for her . . . She remembered looking down
the steep mountain and saying, It will take a long time
to get down, and Larry saying, No, it won't . . . and
Larry saying, We don't need a guide . . . I think we
took the wrong turn. Wait here . . . Ftt be back in ten
seconds. , .And then the terrifying blackness.

Larry had never intended to return for her. him
reconciliation, the honeymoon ... it was all pretense,
part of a plan to murder her. All the time she had been
smugly thanking God for giving her a second chance,
Larry was plotting to kill her. And he had succeeded,
for Catherine knew she would never get out of here.
She was buried alive in a black tomb of horror. The
bats had gone, but she could feel and smell the filthy
slime they had left all over her face and body, and she
knew that they would be back for her. She did not
know if she could keep her sanity through another attack.
The thought of them made her begin to tremble
again, and she forced herself to take slow, deep

breaths.
And then Catherine heard it again and knew she could not stand it another time. It started as a low humming, and then a louder wave of sound, moving toward her. There was a sudden, anguished scream, and it rang out into the darkness over and over, and the other sound kept coming louder and louder, and out of the black tunnel a light appeared, and she heard voices calling out and hands began to reach for her and lift her and she wanted to warn them about the bats, but she was unable to stop screaming.

Noelle AND
CATHERINE

Athens: 1946

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She lay still and rigid so that the bats could not find her, and she listened for the whirr of their wings, her eyes tightly shut.
A man's voice said, "It is a miracle that we found her."
"Is she going to be all right?"
It was Larry's voice.
Terror suddenly flooded through Catherine again. It was as though her body were filled with screaming nerves that warned her to flee. Her killer had come for her. She moaned, "No . . ." and opened her eyes.
She was in her bed in the bungalow. Larry stood at the foot of the bed, and next to him was a man she had never seen before. Larry moved toward her.
"Catherine . . ."
She flinched as he started toward her. "Don't touch me!" Her voice was weak and hoarse.
"Catherine!" Larry's face was filled with distress.
"Get him away from me," Catherine begged.
"She is still in shock," the stranger said. "Perhaps it would be better if you waited in the other room."
Larry studied Catherine a moment, his face expressionless.
"Of course. I want whatever is best for her."
He turned and walked out.
The stranger came closer. He was a short, fat man with a pleasant face and a nice smile. He spoke English with a heavy accent. "I am Doctor Kazomides. You have had a most unpleasant time, Mrs. Douglas, but I assure you you are going to be fine. A mild concussion and a severe shock, but in a few days you will be good as new." He sighed. "They should close those damned caves. This is the third accident this year."
Catherine started to shake her head, then stopped, as it began to throb violently. "It was no accident," she said thickly. "He tried to kill me."

He looked down at her. "Who tried to kill you?"
Her mouth was dry and her tongue was thick. It was difficult to get the words out. "M--my husband."
"No," he said.
He did not believe her. Catherine swallowed and tried again. "He 1---left me in the cave to die."
He shook his head. "It was an accident. I am going to give you a sedative and when you wake up, you will feel much better." .
A surge of fear flowed through her. "No!" she pleaded. "Don't you understand? Ill never wake up. Take me out of here. Please!"
The doctor was smiling reassuringly. "I told you you are going to be fine, Mrs. Douglas. All you need is a nice, long sleep." He reached into a black medical bag and began searching for a hypodermic.
Catherine tried to sit up, but a searing pain shot through her head and she was instantly bathed in perspiration.
She fell back on the bed, her head pounding unbearably.
"You must not try to move yet," Dr. Kazomides warned. "You have been through a terrible ordeal." He took out the hypodermic, filled the needle from a vial of amber fluid and turned to her. 'Turn over, please. When you waken, you will feel like a new person."
"I wont waken," Catherine whispered. "Hell murder me while I'm asleep."
There was a look of concern on the doctor's face. 1 He walked over to her.
"Please turn over, Mrs. Douglas."
She stared at him, her eyes stubborn.

Gently he turned Catherine on her side, pulled up her nightgown and she felt a sharp sting in her hip.
There you are."

She rolled on her back and whispered. "You've just killed me." Her eyes filled with helpless tears.

"Mrs. Douglas," the doctor said, quietly, "do you know how we found you?" ^

She started to shake her head, then remembered the pain. His voice was gentle. "Your husband led us to you."

She stared at him, not comprehending what he was saying. <

"He took the wrong turn and got lost hi the cave," he explained. "When he could not find you, he became frantic. He summoned the police and we immediately organized a search party."

She looked at him, still not understanding. "Larry ...sent for help?"

"He was in a terrible state. He blamed himself for what happened."

She lay there trying to take it in, trying to adjust to this new information. If Larry had tried to kill her, he would not have organized a search party to find her, he would not have been frantic about her safety. She was filled with a terrible confusion. The doctor was watching her sympathetically.

"You will sleep now," he told her. "I will come back to see you in the morning."

She had believed that the man she loved was a murderer. She knew she had to tell Larry and ask his forgiveness, but her head was getting heavy and her eyes kept closing. I'll tell Mm later, she thought, when I wake up. He'll understand and he'll forgive me. And everything will be wonderful again, just the way it was. . . .

She was awakened by a sudden, sharp cracking sound, and her eyes flew open, her pulse racing. A torrent of rain was savagely drumming against the bed room window, and a flash of lightning lit everything in a pale blue light that made the room look like an overexposed photograph. The wind was clawing at the house, trying to scream its way in and the rain beating on the roof and windows sounded like a thousand tiny drums. Every few seconds there was an ominous roll of thunder followed by a flash of lightning.
It was the sound of thunder that had awakened Catherine. She dragged herself up to a sitting position and looked at the small bedside clock. She was groggy from the sedative that the doctor had given her, and she had to squint to make out the figures on the dial. It was three and. She was alone. Larry must be in the other room keeping vigil, worried about her. She had to see him, to apologize. Carefully Catherine swung her feet off the edge of the bed and tried to stand up. A wave of dizziness swept over her. She started to fall and held herself against the bedpost until it passed. She walked unsteadily to the door, her muscles feeling stiff and unused, and the pounding in her head a painful,

aching throb. She stood there a moment, clinging to the door knob for 'support, then opened the door and stepped into the living room.

Larry was not there. There was a light on in the kitchen, and she stumbled toward it. Larry was standing in the kitchen, his back to her, and she called out, "Larry!" but her voice was washed away by the loud clap of thunder. Before she could call again, a woman moved into view. Larry said, "It's dangerous for you to--" The screaming wind carried the rest of his words away.

"--had to come. I had to make sure you--"

"--see us together. No one will ever--"

"--I told you I'd take care of--"

"--went wrong. There's nothing they can--"

"--now, while she's asleep."

Catherine stood there paralyzed, unable to move. It I was like listening to stroboscopic sounds, quick pulsating phrases of words. The rest of the sentences were lost in the howling wind and crack of thunder.

w--we have to move quickly before she--"

All the old terrors returned, shuddering through her body, engulfing her in a nameless, sickening panic. Her nightmare had been real. He was trying to kill her. She had to get out of here before they found her, before they murdered her. Slowly, her whole body trembling, she started backing away. She brushed against a lamp, and it started to fall, but she caught it before it could hit the floor. The pounding of her heart was so loud that she was afraid they would be able to hear it over the sound of the thunder and the rain. She reached the front door and opened it and the wind almost tore it out of her hands.

Catherine stepped outside into the night and quickly closed the door behind her. She was instantly drenched by the cold, driving rain, and for the first time she became aware that she was wearing nothing but a thin nightgown. It did not matter. All that mattered was that she escape. Through the torrents of ram she could see the lights of the hotel lobby in the distance. She could go there and ask for help. But would they believe her? She remembered the doctor's face when she had told him Larry was trying to kill her. No, they would think she was hysterical, they would turn her over to Larry. She must get away from this place. She headed for the steep rocky path that led down to the village. The torrential storm had turned the path into a muddy, slippery mire that sucked at her bare feet and slowed her down so that she had the feeling that she was running hi a nightmare, vainly trying to escape in slow motion while her pursuers raced after her. She kept slipping and falling to the ground and her feet were bleeding from the sharp stones on the path, but

she was not even aware of it. She was in a state of shock, moving like an automaton, falling when a gust of wind hurled her down and picking herself up and moving down the path toward the village again, una no; ware of where she was running. She was no longer con-iousoftherain.

The path suddenly opened out onto a dark, deserted one street on the edge of the village. She kept stumbling
: ahead like a hunted animal, mindlessly putting one foot
| in front of the other, terrified by the awful sounds that rent the night and the flashes of lightning that turned the sky into an inferno.

She reached the lake and stood there staring at it, the wind whipping the thin nightgown around her him body. The calm water had turned into a seething, > churning ocean driven by demonic winds that built up
| high waves that brutally smashed against one another.

Catherine stood there, trying to remember what she was doing here. And-suddenly it came to her. She was
, on her way to meet Bill Eraser. He was waiting for her at his beautiful mansion so they could be married.
, Across the water Catherine caught a glimpse of a yellow light through the driving rain. Bill was there, wait ing. But how was she going to get to him? She looked down and below her she saw the rowboats tied to their moorings, spinning around in the turbulent water, straining to break free.

She knew then what she had to do. She scrambled
I down to a boat and jumped in. Fighting to keep her
§ balance she untied the rope holding it to the dock. Instantly the boat leaped away from the dock, soaring in its sudden freedom. Catherine was knocked off her feet. She pulled herself onto a seat and picked up the oars, trying to remember how Larry had used them.
. But there was no Larry. It must have been Bill. Yes, him she could remember Bill rowing with her. They were going to meet his mother and father. Now she tried to use the oars, but the giant waves kept pitching the boat from side to side and spinning it around, and the oars were pulled out of her hands and sucked into the
.water. She sat there watching them disappear from sight. The boat was hurtling toward the center of the

lake. Catherine's teeth began to chatter from the cold, and she began to shiver in an uncontrollable spasm.

She felt something lap at her feet and she looked down and saw that the boat was filling with water. She started to cry, because her wedding dress was going to get wet Bill Fraser had bought it for her and now he was going to be angry with her.

She wore a wedding gown because she and Bill were in a church and the minister who looked like Bill's father

said if anyone objects to this marriage speak up
now or ... and then a woman's voice said, now, while
she's asleep, and the lights went out and Catherine was
back in the cave and Larry was holding her down and
the woman was throwing water on her, drowning her.
She looked around for the yellow light in Bill's house,
but it was gone. He did not want to many her any
more, and now she had no one.
The shore was very far away now, hidden somewhere
beyond the beating, driving rain, and Catherine
was alone hi the stormy night, with the screaming, banshee
wind of the meltemi in her ears. The boat began
to rock treacherously as the huge waves smashed
against it. But Catherine was no longer afraid. Her
body was slowly filling with a delicious warmth, and
the ram felt like soft velvet on her skin. She clasped
her hands in front of her like a small child and began
to recite the prayer that she had learned as a little girl.
"Now I lay me down to sleep ... I pray the Lord
my soul to keep ... If I should die before I wake .. .
I pray the Lord my soul to take." And she was filled
with a wonderful happiness because she knew at last
that everything was all right She was on her way
home.
At that moment a large wave caught the stern of the
boat, and it slowly began to overturn in the black bottomless
lake. him
Book Three

THE TRIAL
Athens: 1947

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five hours before the murder trial of Noelle Page and
Larry Douglas was to begin, Room 33 in the Arsation ;l Courthouse in Athens
was overflowing with spectators. , The courthouse is an enormous gray building
that one takes up an entire square block on University Street
and Stada. Of the thirty courtrooms in the building, only three rooms are
reserved for criminal trials:
Rooms 21, 30 and 33. Number 33 had been chosen
for this trial because it was the largest. The corridors him outside Room 33
were jammed and police in gray uniforms
and gray shirts were stationed at the two en trances to control the crowd.
The sandwich stand in
|(the corridor was sold out in the first five minutes, and 1 there was a
long line in front of the telephone booth.
Georgios Skouri, the Chief of Police, was personally
| supervising the security arrangements. Newspaper photographers
were everywhere and Skouri managed to
pave his photograph taken with pleasing frequency.
[Passes to the courtroom were at a premium. For weeks
lembers of the Greek judiciary had been besieged with requests from friends

and relatives. Insiders who
|were able to secure them bartered them in exchange
other favors or sold them to the jackals who were
tlping them for as high as five hundred drachmas
piece.

The actual setting of the murder trial was common-ilace. Courtroom 33 on the second floor of the court-bouse was musty and old, the arena of thousands of battles that had taken place over the years. The room was about forty feet wide and three hundred feet long. The seats were divided into three rows, six feet apart, with nine wooden benches to each row.

At the front of the courtroom was a raised dais behind a six-foot polished mahogany partition with high-backed leather chairs for the three presiding judges.

The center chair was for the President of the Court and above it hung a square, dirty mirror reflecting a section of the courtroom.

In front of the dais was the witness stand, a small raised platform on which was fixed a reading lectern with a wooden tray to hold papers. On the lectern in gold leaf was the crucifix, Jesus on the cross with two of his disciples by his side. Against the far wall was the jury box, filled now with its ten jurors. On the far left was the box where the accused sat In front of the defendants' box was the lawyers' table.

The walls of the room were of stucco, and there was linoleum on the floor hi contrast to the worn wooden floors in the courtrooms on the first floor. A dozen electric light bulbs hung from the ceiling, covered with glass globes. In a far corner of the room, the airduct of an old-fashioned heater ascended into the ceiling. A section of the room had been reserved for the press, and representatives were there from Reuters, United Press, International News Service, Shsin Hau Agency, French Press Agency and Tass, among others.

The circumstances of the murder trial itself would have been sensational enough, but the personae were so famous that the excited spectators did not know where to look first. It was like a three-ring circus. In the first row of benches was Philippe Sorel, the star, who, it was rumored, was a former lover of Noelle Page. Sorel had smashed a camera on the way into the courtroom and had adamantly refused to speak to the press. He sat in his seat now, withdrawn and silent, an invisible wall around him! One row hi back of Sorel sat Annand Gautier. The tall, saturnine director was constantly scanning the courtroom as though mentally

I making notes for his next picture. Near Gautier sat Is* |rael Katz, the famous French surgeon and resistance
[hero.
Two seats away from him sat Wflliam Fraser, special
> assistant to the President of the United States. Next to
, Fraser a seat had been reserved and a rumor swept
through the courtroom like wildfire that Constantin
I Demiris was going to appear.
Everywhere the spectators turned was a familiar him face: a politician, a singer, a well-known sculptor, an
| internationally famous author. But though the audience
[in the judicial circus was filled with celebrities, the
main focus of attention was in the center ring.
At one end of the defendant's box sat Noelle Page,
' exquisitely beautiful, her honey skin a bit paler than
Usual, and dressed as though she bad just stepped out
| of Madame Chanel's. There was a regal quality about \ Noelle, a noble presence that heightened the drama of
[what was happening to her. It whetted the excitement
I of the spectators and sharpened their bloodlust.
As an American newsweekly expressed it: The emo-' impression that flowed toward Noelle Page from the crowd
{that had come to witness her trial was so strong that it I became an almost physical presence in the courtroom.
I It was not a feeling of sympathy or of enmity, it was
I simply a feeling of expectation. The woman being tried
I for murder by the state was a superwoman, a goddess
Ion a golden pedestal, who was high above them, and
ÍJthey were there to watch their idol being brought down
I to their level and destroyed. The feeling in the court-iroom
must have been the same feelings that were in
I'lhe hearts of the peasants who watched Marie Antoi| nette riding to her doom in the tumbrel.
Noelle Page was not the only act in the legal circus.
| At the other end of the defendant's box sat Larry
I Douglas, filled with a smoldering anger. His handsome
| face was pale, and he had lost weight, but those things
[only served to accentuate his sculptured features, and
I many of the women in the courtroom had an urge to
take him in their anus and console him in one way or
another. Since Larry had been arrested, he had received
hundreds of letters from women all over the
world, dozens of gifts and proposals of marriage.
The third star of the circus was Napoleon Chotas, a
man who was as well known in Greece as Noelle Page.
Napoleon Chotas was acknowledged to be one of the
greatest criminal lawyers in the world. He had defended
clients ranging from heads of government who
had been found with their fingers in the public coffers,
to murderers who had been caught red-handed by the
police, and he had never lost a major case. Chotas
was thin and emaciated-looking 'and he sat in the
courtroom watching* the spectators with large, sad

bloodhound eyes in a ruined face. When Chotas addressed a jury, his speech was slow and hesitant, and he had great difficulty expressing himself. Sometimes he was hi such an agony of embarrassment that a juror would helpfully blurt out the word that Napoleon Chotas was fumbling for, and when this happened the lawyer's face would fill with such relief and inexpressible gratitude that the entire panel of jurors would feel a wave of affection for the man. Outside the courtroom Chotas was a crisp, incisive speaker with a consummate mastery of language and syntax. He spoke seven languages fluently and when his busy schedule permitted, he gave lectures to jurists all over the world.

Seated on the lawyer's bench a few feet away from Chotas, was Frederick Stavros, the defense attorney for Larry Douglas. The experts agreed that while Stavros might be competent enough to handle routine cases, he was hopelessly out of his depth in this one.

Noelle Page and Larry Douglas had already been tried hi the newspapers and in the minds of the populace and had been found guilty. No one doubted their guilt for a moment. Professional gamblers were offering thirty to one that the defendants would be convicted.

To the trial, then, was lent the added excitement of

. watching the greatest criminal lawyer in Europe work | iris magic against enormous odds.

When it had been announced that Chotas was going i'to defend Noelle Page, the woman who had betrayed | Constantin Demiris and held him up to public ridicule, , the news had created a furor. As powerful as Chotas | was, Constantin Demiris was a hundred times more and and one could imagine what had possessed to go against Constantin Demiris. lite truth [was even more interesting than the bizarre rumors that | were flying around.

The lawyer had taken on Noelle Page's defense at |{he personal request of Demiris.

him Three months before the trial was scheduled to be* , the warden himself had come to Noelle's cell at the Nikodemous Street Prison to tell her that Con-atin Demiris had asked permission to visit her. No. had wondered when she would bear from Demiris. acre had been no word from him since her arrest, ' a deep, foreboding silence.

Noelle bad lived with Demiris long enough to know deep was his sense of amour-propre and to what ngths he would go to avenge even the smallest slight. : had humiliated him as no other person ever had

fore, and he was powerful enough to exact a terrible
ribution. The only question was: How would he go
ft? Noelle was certain Demiris would disdain
as simple as the bribing of a jury or nidges,
would be satisfied with no less than some complex
"iavellian plot to exact his revenge, and Noelle I lain awake on her cell cot
night after night putting
in Demiris' mind, discarding strategy after him, just as he must have done,
searching for a
feet plan. It was like playing mental chess with De-except
that she and Larry were the pawns, and him stakes were life and death,
ft was probable that Demiris would want to destroy
' and Larry, but Noelle knew better than anyone the

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subtlety of Demiris' mind, so it was also possible that
he might plan to destroy only one of them and let the
other one live and suffer. If Demiris arranged for them
both to be executed, he would have his vengeance, but
it would be over with too quickly--there would be
nothing left for him to savor. Noelle had carefully examined
every possibility, each possible variation of the
game, and it seemed to her that Constantin Demiris
might arrange to let Larry die and let her live, either hi
prison or under Demiris' control, because that would
be the surest way to prolong his vengeance indefinitely.
First Noelle would suffer the pain of losing the man she loved, and then she
would have to endure whatever
exquisite agonies Demiris had planned for her future.
Part of the pleasure Demiris would derive from his
vengeance would be in telling Noelle in advance, so she could taste the full
measure of despair.
It had therefore come as no surprise to Noelle when
the warden had appeared at her cell to tell her that
Constantin Demiris wished to see her.

Noelle had been the first to arrive. She had been
ushered into the warden's private office where she had
been discreetly left alone with a makeup case brought
by her maid, to prepare herself for Demiris' visit.
Noelle ignored the cosmetics and the combs and
brushes that lay on the desk and walked over to the
window and looked out. It was the first sight she had
had of the outside world in three months, other than
the'quick glimpses when she had been taken from the
Saint Nikodemous Street Prison to the Arsakion, the
courthouse, on the day of her arraignment. She had
been transported to the courthouse hi a prison van with
bars and escorted to the basement, where a narrow
cage elevator had carried her and her warders to the
second-floqr corridor. The hearing had been held there
and she had been remanded for trial and returned to

the prison.
Now Noelle stared out the window and watched the traffic below on University Street, men and women and children hurrying home to be united with their families. For the first time hi her life Noelle felt frightened. She had no illusions about her chances of acquittal. She had read the newspapers and she knew that this was going to be more than a trial. This was going to be a blood bath hi which she and Larry were to be served up as victims to satisfy the conscience of an outraged society. The Greeks hated her because she had mocked the sanctity of marriage, envied her because she was young and beautiful and rich and despised her because they sensed that she was indifferent to their feelings.
In the past Noelle had been careless of life, recklessly squandering time as though it were eternal: but now something in her had changed. The imminent prospect of death had made Noelle realize for the first time how much she wanted to live. There was a fear hi her that was like a growing cancer, and if she could, she was ready to make a deal for her life, even though she knew that Demiris would find ways to make it a hell on earth. She would face that when it happened.
, When the time came, she would find a way to outwit him.
Meanwhile she needed his help to stay alive. She I had one advantage. She had always taken the idea of death lightly, so Demiris had no idea how much life meant to her now. If he had, he would surely let her I die. Noelle wondered again what webs he had been | weaving for her over the past few months, and even as wondered, she heard the office door open and she around and saw Constantin Demiris standing in |the doorway and after one shocked look at him, Noelle |knew that she had nothing more to fear.
Constantin Demiris had aged ten years hi the few nths since Noelle had seen him. He looked gaunt I haggard, and his clothes hung loosely on his frame, it was his eyes that held her attention. They were eyes of a soul that had been through hell. The hers- sence of power that had been within Demiris, the dynamic, overpowering core of vitality was gone. It was as though a light switch had been turned off, and all that was left was the pale afterglow of a faded, once remembered brilliance. He stood there, staring at her, his eyes filled with pain.
For a split second Noelle wondered whether this could be some kind of trick, part of a plan, but no man on earth could be that good an actor. It was Noelle who broke the long silence. 'Trn sorry, Costa," she said.
Demiris nodded slowly, as though the movement

cost him an effort.
"I wanted to kill you,"-he said wearily, and it was an old man's voice. "I had everything worked out."
"Why didn't you?"
He replied quietly, "Because you killed me first. I've never needed anyone before. I suppose I've never really been in pain before."
"Costa--"
"No. Let me finish. I'm not a forgiving man. If I could do without you, believe me I would. But I can't. I can't go through any more. I want you back, Noelle."
She fought to show nothing of what she was feeling inside. "That's really not up to me anymore, is it?"
"ÏÏI could have you freed, would you come back to me? To stay?"
To stay. A thousand images flashed through Noelle's mind. She would never see Larry again, never touch him, hold him. Noelle had no choice, but even if she had, life was sweeter. And as long as she was alive, there was always a chance. She looked up at Demiris.
"Yes, Costa."
Demiris stared at her, his face filling with emotion. When he spoke, Ms voice was husky. "Thank you," he said. "We're going to forget the past. It's gone and nothing will change it." His voice brightened. "It's the future I'm interested in. Fm going to engage an attorney for you."
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"Who?"
"Napoleon Chotas."
And that was the moment that Noelle really knew she had won the chess match. Check. Checkmate.

Now Napoleon Chotas sat at the long wooden lawyer's table thinking about the battle that was about to take place. Chotas would have much preferred that the trial be held hi loannina rather than hi Athens, bat that was impossible, since by Greek law a trial could not take place in the district where the crime had been committed. Chotas had not the slightest doubt about the guilt of Noelle Page, but that was unimportant to him, for like all criminal lawyers he felt that the guilt or innocence of a client was immaterial. Everyone was entitled to a Mr trial.
The trial that was about to begin, however, was something different For the first tune in his professional life Napoleon Chotas had allowed himself to become emotionally involved with a client: He was in love with Noelle Page. He had gone to see her at Constantin Demiris' request and though Chotas had been familiar with the public image of Noelle Page, he had

been totally unprepared for the reality. She had received him as though he were a guest paying a social call. Noelle had showed neither nervousness nor fear, and at first Chotas had attributed it to her lack of understanding of the desperateness of her situation. The opposite had proved to be true. Noelle was the most intelligent and fascinating woman he had ever encoun, tered and certainly the most beautiful. Chotas, though his appearance belied it, was a connoisseur of women, and he recognized the special qualities that Noelle posÍ sessed. It was a joy for Chotas merely to sit and talk him with her. They discussed law-and art and crime and
v history, and she was a constant amazement to him. He
I could fully appreciate Noelle's liaison with a man like Constantin Demiris, but her involvement with Larry Douglas puzzled him. He felt that she was far above Douglas, and yet Chotas supposed that there was some unexplainable chemistry that made people fall in love with the most unlikely partners. Brilliant scientists married empty-headed blondes, great writers married stupid actresses, intelligent statesmen married trollops. Chotas remembered the meeting with Demiris. They had known each other socially over the years, but Chotas' law firm had never done any work for him. Demiris had asked Chotas to his home at Varkiza. Demiris had plunged into the conversation without preamble. "As you may know," he had said, "I have a deep interest in this trial. Miss Page is the only woman in my life I have ever truly loved." The two men had talked for six hours, discussing every aspect of the case,' every possible strategy. It was decided that Noelle's plea would be Not Guilty. When Chotas rose to leave, a deal had been agreed upon. For undertaking Noelle's defense Napoleon Chotas would be given double his usual fee, and his firm would become the major legal counsel to Constantin Demiris' far-flung empire, a plum worth untold millions.
MI don't care how you do it," Demiris had concluded, fiercely. "Just see to it that nothing goes wrong."
Chotas had accepted the bargain. And then, ironically, he had fallen in love with Noelle Page. Chotas had remained a bachelor, though he kept a string of mistresses, and now when he had found the one woman he wanted to marry, she was out of his reach. He looked at Noelle now, sitting in the defendant's box, beautiful and serene. She wore a simple black wool suit with a plain, high-necked white blouse, and she looked like a Princess from a fairy tale.
Noelle turned and saw Chotas staring at her and gave him a warm smile. He smiled back, but his mind was already turning to the difficult task that lay ahead of hmi. The clerk was calling the Court to order.

The spectators rose as two judges hi business suits entered and took their seats on the bench. The third judge, the President of the Court, followed and took the center seat. He intoned,"/ synethriassis archetd," The trial had begun.

Peter Demonldes, Special Prosecutor for the Kate, nervously rose to make his opening address to the jury. Demonides was a skilled and able prosecutor, but he had been up against Napoleon Chotas before--many times, m fact--and the results were invariably the same. The old bastard was unbeatable. Almost all trial lawyers browbeat hostile witnesses, but Chotas coddled them. He nurtured them and loved them and before he was through, they were contradicting themselves all over the place, trying to be helpful to him. He had a knack of turning hard evidence into speculation and speculation into fantasy. Chotas had the most brilliant legal mind Demonides had ever encountered and the greatest knowledge of jurisprudence, but that was not his strength. His strength was his knowledge of people. A reporter had once asked Chotas how he had learned so much about human nature.

"I don't know a damned thing about human nature," Chotas had answered. "I only know about people," and the remark had been widely quoted.

In addition to everything else this was the kind of trial that was tailor-made for Chotas to take before a jury, filled as it was with glamour, passion and murder. Of one thing Demonides was certain: Napoleon Chotas would let nothing stop him from winning this case. But neither would Demonides. He knew that he had a strong evidential case against die defendants, and while Chotas might be able to spellbind the jury into overlooking the evidence, he would not be able to sway the three fudges on die bench. So it was with a feeling of determination mixed with apprehension that the Special Prosecutor for the State began his opening address.

la skillful, broad strokes Demonides outlined the State's case against the two defendants. By law the foreman of the ten-man jury was an attorney, so

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Demonides directed his legal points to him and his general points to the rest of the jury.

"Before this trial has ended," Demonides said, "the State will prove that these two people conspired together to cold-bloodedly murder Catherine Douglas because she stood in the way of their plans. Her only crime was in loving her husband, and for this she "was killed. The two defendants have been placed at the scene of the murder. They are the pnly ones who had

the motive and the opportunity, We shall prove beyond a shadow of a doubt . . ."

Demonides kept his address short and to the point, and it was the turn of the Attorney for the Defense.

The spectators in the courtroom watched Napoleon Chotas as he clumsily gathered his papers together and prepared to make his opening speech. Slowly he approached the jury box, his manner hesitant and difficult as though awed by his surroundings.

Watching him William Fraser could not but marvel at his skill. If he had not once spent an evening with Chotas at a party in the British Embassy, Fraser too would have been deceived by the man's manner. He could see the jurors helpfully straining forward to catch the words that fell softly from Napoleon Chotas' Bps.

"This woman on trial," Chotas was saying to the jurors, "is not being tried for murder. There has been no murder. If there had been a murder, I am sure that my brilliant colleague for the State would have been good enough to have shown us the body of the victim. He has not done so, so we must assume that there him* no body. And therefore no murder." He stopped to scratch the crown of his head and looked down at the floor as though trying to remember where he had left oft. He nodded to himself, then looked up at the jury. "No, gentlemen, that is not what this trial is about. My client is being tried because she broke another law, an unwritten law that says you must not fornicate with another woman's husband. The press has already found her guilty of that charge, and the public has found her guilty, and now they are demanding that she be punished" Chotas stopped to pull out a large white handkerchief, stared at it a moment as if wondering how it had gotten there, blew his nose and replaced the handkerchief in his pocket. "Very well. If she has broken a law, let us punish her. But not for murder, gentlemen. Not for a murder that was never committed. Noelle Page was guilty of being the mistress of--" he paused delicately "--a most important man. His name is a secret, but if you must know it, you can find it on the front page of any newspaper."

There was appreciative laughter from the spectators.

Auguste Lanchon swung around in his seat and glared at the spectators, his little piggy eyes blazing with rage. How dare they laugh at his Noelle! Demiris meant nothing to her, nothing. It was the man to whom a woman gave up her virginity that she always cherished. The fat little shopkeeper from Marseille had not been able to communicate with Noelle yet, but he had paid four hundred precious drachmas for a courtroom pass, and he would be able to watch his beloved Noelle every day. When she was acquitted, Lanchon would step forward and take over her life. He turned his attention

to the lawyer.
"It has been said by the prosecution that the two defendants,
Miss Page and Mr. Lawrence Douglas, murdered
Mr. Douglas* wife so that the defendants could
marry each other. Look at them."
Chotas turned to look at Noelle Page and Larry
Douglas and every eye in the courtroom did the same.
"Are they in tove with each other? Possibly. But
does that make them plotters and schemers and murderers?
No. If there are any victims in this trial, yon
are looking at them now. I have gone into all the evidence
very carefully and I have convinced myself, as I
win convince you, that these two people are innocent
Please let me make it clear to the jury that I am not
' representing Lawrence Douglas. He has his own coun- sel and a very able
fellow he is. But it has been alleged
by the state that the two people sitting there are fellow
conspirators, that they have plotted and committed
murder together. So if one is guilty, both are guilty. I
tell you now that both are innocent. And nothing less
than the corpus delicti will make me change my mind.
And there is none."
Chotas' voice was growing angrier. "It is a fiction.
My client has no more idea than you do whether
Catherine Douglas is dead or alive. How would she
know? She has never even met her, let alone harmed
her. Imagine the enormity of being accused of killing
someone you have never laid eyes on. There are many
theories as to what could have happened to Mrs.
Douglas. That she was murdered is one of them. But only one. The most
probable theory is that somehow
she discovered that her husband and Miss Page were in
love, and out of a feeling of hurt--not fear, gentlemen --hurt, she ran away.
It is as simple as that, and
for that you do not execute an innocent woman and an
innocent man."
Frederick Stavros, Larry Douglas* attorney, gave a
surreptitious sigh of relief. His constant nightmare bad
been that Noelle Page would be acquitted, while his
client would be convicted. If that happened he would
become the laughing-stock of the legal profession.
Stavros had been looking for a way to hitch onto
Napoleon Chotas' star and now Chotas had done it for
him. By linking the two defendants together as he had
just done, Noelle's defense had become his own client's
defense. Winning this trial was going to change Frederick
Stavros' entire future, give him everything he had
ever wanted. He was filled with a feeling of warm gratitude
for the old master.
Stavros noted with satisfaction that the jury was
hanging on Chotas* every word.
"This was not a woman who was interested in material
things," Chotas was saying with admiration. "She

was willing to give everything op without hesitation for the man she loved Sorely, my good friends, that is not the character of a scheming, conniving murderess."

As Chotas went on, the emotions of the hirers shifted like a visible tide, reaching out toward Noelle Page with growing empathy and understanding. Slowly and skillfully the attorney built up a portrait of a beautiful woman who was the mistress of one of the most powerful and richest men in the world, who had every luxury and privilege lavished .upon her, but who in the end had succumbed to her love for a penniless young pilot she had only known a short time.

Chotas played on the emotions of the jurors like a master musician, making them laugh, bringing tears to their eyes and always holding their rapt attention.

When his opening address was over, Chotas clumsily shuffled back to the long table and awkwardly sat down, and it was all that the spectators could do to keep from applauding.

, Larry Douglas sat in the witness box listening to Chotas' defense of him, and Larry was furious. He did not need anyone to defend bun. He had done nothing wrong, this whole trial was a stupid mistake, and if there was any blame it was Noelle's. It had all been her , idea. Larry looked at her now, beautiful and serene. | But he felt no stirring of desire, only the memory of a ', passion, a faint emotional shadow, and he marveled ; that he had put his life in jeopardy for this woman. / Larry's eyes swung toward the press box. An attractive jgirl reporter in her twenties was staring at him. He gave her a little smile and watched her face light up.

Peter Demonides was examining a witness.

"Would you please tell the Court your name?"

"Alexis Minos."

"And your occupation?"

"I am an attorney."

"Would you look at the two defendants seated in the defendant's box, Mr. Minos, and tell the Court if you have ever seen either of them before?"

"Yes, sir. One of them."

"Which one?"

"The man."

"Mr. Lawrence Douglas?"

"That's correct."

"Would you tell us, please, under what circumstances you saw Mr. Douglas?"

"He came to my office six months ago."

"Did he come to consult you in your professional capacity?"

"Yes."

"In other words he required some legal service of you?"

"Yes."
"And would you please tell us what it was that he wanted you to do for him?"
"He asked me to get him a divorce."
"And did he retain you for this purpose?"
"No. When he explained the circumstances to me, I told him it would be impossible for him to get a divorce in Greece."
"And what were the circumstances?"
"First of all he said there must not be any publicity, and secondly he said that his wife refused to give him a divorce."
"In other words he had asked his wife for a divorce and she had refused?"
"That is what he told me."
"And you explained to him that you couldn't help him? That unless his wife was willing to give him a divorce, it would be difficult or impossible for him to obtain one, and that there very wen might be publicity?"
"That is correct"
"So, short of taking desperate measures, there was nothing the defendant could--"
"Objectionl"
"Sustained."
"Your witness."

Napoleon Chotas lifted himself out of his chair with a sigh and slowly walked over to the witness. Peter Demonides was not worried. Minos was a lawyer and too experienced to be deceived by Chotas' forensic bag of tricks.
"You're an attorney, Mr, Minos,"
"lam."
"And an excellent one, Fin sure. Fm surprised that our professional paths have not crossed sooner. The firm Fm with deals in many branches of law. Perhaps you've run across one of my partners in some corporate litigation?"
"No. I don't do corporate work,"
"I beg your pardon. Perhaps in some tax case, then?"
"I am not a tax lawyer."
"Oh." Chotas was beginning to look puzzled and ill-at-ease, as though he was making a fool of himself.
"Securities?"
"No." Minos was beginning to enjoy the lawyer's humiliation. His face took on a smug look and Peter Demonides began to worry. How many times had he seen that look on the faces of witnesses that Napoleon Chotas was preparing for the slaughter?
Chotas was scratching Ms head in bafflement "I give up," he said ingenuously. "What kind of law do you specialize in?"

"Divorce cases." The answer was a barbed shaft, perfectly delivered.
A rueful look appeared on Chotas' face and he shook his head. "I should have known my good friend Mr. Demonides would have an expert up here."
"Thank you, sir." Alexis Minos made no attempt to conceal his smugness now. Not every witness got a

\i \

chance to score off Chotas and in Minos' mind be was already embellishing the story to tell at the club that evening.
I've never even handled a divorce case," Chotas was confiding in an embarrassed voice, "so FU have to defer to your expertise."
The old lawyer was caving in completely. It would make an even better story than Minos had anticipated.
"IH bet you keep very busy," Chotas said.
"I have as many cases as I can handle."
"As many as you can handle!" There was open admiration in Napoleon Chotas' voice.
"Sometimes more."
Peter Demonides looked down at the floor, unable to watch what was happening. >
Chotas' voice took on an awed tone. "I don't want to pry into your personal business, Mr. Minos, but as a matter of professional curiosity, how many clients would you say walk through your door in a year?"
"Well, that's pretty difficult to say."
"Come on now, Mr. Minos. Don't be modest. Make a guess."
"Oh, I suppose two hundred. That's an approximation, you understand."
'Two hundred divorces a year! The paper work alone must be staggering."
"Wefl, there aren't actually two hundred divorces."
Chotas rubbed his chin, perplexed. "What?"
"They're not all divorces."
A puzzled look came over Chotas' face. "Didn't you say that you only handled divorce cases?"
"Yes, but--" Minos' voice wavered.
"But what?" Chotas asked to bewilderment
"Well, what I mean is, they don't all get divorced."
"But isn't that why they come to see you?"
"Yes, but some of them--well--change their minds for one reason or another."
Chotas nodded hi sudden understanding. "Ah! You mean there's a reconciliation or something of the sort?"
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"Exactly," Minos said.

"So that what you're saying is that--what?--ten percent don't bother to go through with the divorce action?"

Minos shifted in his chair uneasily. "The percentage is a bit higher."

"How much higher? Fifteen percent? Twenty?"

"Closer to forty."

Napoleon Chotas stared at him in amazement. "Mr. Minos, are you telling us that almost half the people who come to see you decide not to get a divorce?"

"Yes."

Tiny beads of sweat were popping out on Minos' forehead. He turned to look at Peter Demonides, but Demonides was studiously concentrating on a crack in the floor.

"Well, I'm sure it's not a lack of confidence in your ability," said Chotas.

"Certainly not," Minos said defensively. "They very often come to me on a stupid impulse. A husband or wife will have a fight and feel they hate each other and think they want a divorce, but when you come right down to it, in most cases they change their minds." He stopped abruptly as he realized the full import of his words.

"Thank you," Chotas said gently. "You've been most helpful."

Peter Demonides was examining the witness.

"Your name, please?"

"Kasta. Irene Kasta."

"Miss or Mrs.?"

"Mrs. Tm a widow."

"What is your occupation, Mrs. Kasta?"

"Fm a housekeeper."

"Where do you work?"

"For a rich family in Rafina."

"That's a village near the sea, is it not? A hundred aeters north of Athens?"

"Yes."

"Would you please take a look at the two defendants seated at the table? Have you ever seen them before?"

"Sure. Lots of times."

"Would you tell us under what circumstances?**

"They live in the house next to the villa where I work. I seen them on the beach a lot They was naked."

There was a gasp from the spectators and then a quick buzz of conversation. Peter Demonides glanced over at Chotas to see if he was going to object, but the old lawyer sat at the table, a dreamy smile on his face. The smile made Demonides more nervous than ever. He turned back to the witness.

"You are certain that these are the two people you saw? You are under oath, you know."

"Them's the two, all right."
"When they were together on the beach, did they seem friendly?"
"Well, they didn't act like brother and sister."
A laugh from the spectators.
"Thank you, Mrs. Kasta." Demonides turned to Chotas. "Your witness."
Napoleon Chotas nodded amiably and rose and ambled over to the formidable-looking woman in the witness box.
"How long have you worked at this villa, Mrs. Kasta?"
"Seven years."
"Seven years! You must be very good at your job."
"You bet I am."
"Perhaps you could recommend a good housekeeper for me. I've been thinking about buying a place on the beach at Rafina. My problem is, I need privacy so I can work. As I remember those villas, they're all bunched together."
"Oh, no, sir. Each villa is separated by a big wall."
"Oh, good. And they're not crowded next to one another?"
"No, sir, not at all. Those villas are at least a hundred yards away from each other. I know one that's up for sale. You'd have all the privacy you need and I can recommend my sister to do the housekeeping for you. She's good and she's tidy and she cooks a bit."
"Well, thank you, Mrs. Kasta, that sounds wonderful. Perhaps I could call her this afternoon."
"She does a bit of day work. She'll be home at six."
"What time is it now?"
"I don't carry a watch."
"Ah. There's a large clock on the wall over there. What does it say?"
"Well, it's hard to make out. It's clear across the room."
"How far away would you say that clock was?"
"About--er--fifty feet."
"Twenty-three feet, Mrs. Kasta. No more questions."

It was the fifth day of the trial. Doctor Israel Katz's missing leg was paining him again. While he was performing an operation, he could stand on his artificial leg for hours on end, and it never bothered him. But sitting here without the intense concentration to divert his attention, the nerve ends kept sending memory messages to a limb that was no longer there. Katz shifted restlessly in his seat, trying to ease the pressure on his hip. He had tried to see Noelle every day since he had arrived in Athens but with no success. He had spoken to Napoleon Chotas, and the lawyer had explained that Noelle was too upset to see old friends and
> that it would be best to wait until the trial was over. Israel

Katz had asked him to tell Noelle that he was here
to help her in every way he could, but he could not be
certain that she ever received the message. He had sat him in court day after
day, hoping Noelle would look his him way, but she never even glanced at the
spectators.
Israel Katz owed his life to her, and he felt frustrated
because there was no way he could help repay
I that debt He had no idea how the trial was going or
whether Noelle would be convicted or acquitted. Choi
tas was good. If any man in the world could free Noelle
it was he. Yet somehow Israel Katz was filled with
unease. The trial was far from over. There could still
be some surprises ahead.

A witness for the prosecution was being sworn in.
"Your name?"
"Christian Barbet."
"You are a French national, Mr. Barbet?"
"Yes."
"And where is your residence?"
"In Paris."
"Would you tell the Court your occupation?"
"I am the owner of a private detective agency.**
"And where is that agency located?"
"The main office is in Paris."
"What kind of cases do you handle?"
"Many kinds. . . commercial pilfering, missing persons,
surveillance for jealous husbands or wives...."
"Monsieur Barbet, would you be good enough to
look around this courtroom and tell us whether anyone
in this room has ever been a client of yours?"
A long, slow look around the room. "Yes, sir."
"Would you tell the Court who this person is,
please?"
"The lady sitting over there. Miss Noelle Page."
A murmur of interest from the spectators.
"Are you telling us that Miss Page hired you to do
some detective work for her?"
"I am, monsieur."
"And would you tell us exactly what that work consisted
of?"
"Yes, sir. She was interested in a man named Larry
Douglas. She wanted me to find out everything I could
about him."
"That is the same Larry Douglas who is on trial in
this courtroom?"
"Yes, sir."
"And Miss Page paid you for this?"
"Yes, sir."
"Would you please look at these exhibits in my
, band. Are these the records of the payments that were
made to you?"
"That is correct."

'Tell us, Monsieur Barbet, how did you go about
obtaining this information on Mr. Douglas?"
"It was very difficult, monsieur. You see I was in
France, and Mr. Douglas was in England and later the
United States, and with France occupied by the Geri:
mans--"
"I beg your pardon?"
"I said, with France occupied--"
"Just a moment. I want to be sure that I understand
what you are saying, Monsieur Barbet. We have been
ttold by Miss Page's attorney that she and Larry
. Douglas met a few short months ago and fell madly in
flove. Now you are telling this Court that their love afford;
fair started--how long ago?"
"At least six years ago."
Pandemonium.
Demonides flashed Chotas a triumphant look. "Your
futftness."
Napoleon Chotas rubbed his eyes, rose from the
long table at which he was sitting and walked over to
lie witness box.
"I won't detain you long, Mr. Barbet. I know yon
nust be anxious to get back to your family hi France."
"You may take your time, monsieur." Smugly.
"Thank you. Forgive me for being personal, but its certainly a fine-looking suit you're wearing, Mr.
Jarbet."
"Thank you, monsieur."
"Made in Paris, was it?"
"Yes, sir."
"It fits beautifully. I don't seem to have any hick
my suits. Have you ever tried the English tailors? they're supposed to be excellent, also."
"No, monsieur."
"I'm sure you've been to England many times?"

"Well--no."
"Never?"
«No, sir."
"Have you ever been to the United States of America?"
"No."
"Never?"
"No, sir."
"Have you ever visited the South Pacific?"
"No, sir."
"Then you must truly be a fantastic detective, Mr.
Barbet. My hat is oft to you. These reports of yours
cover the activities of Larry Douglas hi England and
the United States and the South Pacific--and yet you tell us that you have never even been to any of these
places. I can only assume that you are psychic."
"Permit me to correct you, monsieur. It was not
necessary for me to have been in any of those places. I

employ what we call correspondent agencies in England
and in America."
"Ah, forgive my stupidity. Of course! So it was actually those people who
covered the activities of Mr. Douglas?"
"Exactement."
"And so the fact is that you yourself have no personal
knowledge of Larry Douglas' movements."
"Well. . .no,sir."
"So in reality all your information is secondhand."
"I suppose... in a sense, yes."
Chotas turned to the judges. "I move to strike the
entire testimony of this witness, Your Honors, on the
grounds that it is hearsay."
Peter Demonides leaped to his feet "Objection,
Your Honors! Noelle Page hired Mr. Barbet to get information
on Larry Douglas. That is not hearsay-->*
"My learned colleague has submitted the records as
evidence," Chotas said gently. "I am perfectly willing
to accept it--if he wishes to bring the men here who
actually conducted the surveillance of Mr. Douglas.
Otherwise I must ask the Court to assume that there
was no such surveillance and ask that the testimony of
this witness be held inadmissible."
The President of the Court turned to Demonides.
"Are you prepared to bring your witnesses here?" he
asked.
"That's impossible," Peter Demonides spluttered.
"Mr. Chotas knows that it,would take weeks to locate
them!"
The President turned to Chotas. "Motion granted."

Peter Demonides was examining.
"Would you state your name, please?"
"George Mousson."
"What is your occupation?"
"I am a reception clerk at the Palace Hotel at loan"
nina."
"Would you please take a look at the two defendants
sitting at the table. Have you ever seen them before?"
"The man. He was a guest at thefcotel last August."
"That would be Mr. Lawrence Douglas?"
"Yes, sir."
"Was he alone when he checked into the hotel?"
"No, sir."
"Would you tell us who he was with?"
«His wife."
"Catherine Douglas?"
"Yes, sir."
"They registered as Mr. and Mrs. Douglas?"
"Yes, sir."
"Did you and Mr. Douglas ever discuss the Caves of
Perama?"
"Yes, sir, we did."

"Did you bring up the subject or did Mr. Douglas?"
"As I recall, he did. He asked me about them and said his wife was anxious for Mm to take her there. That she loved caves. I thought that was unusual."
"Oh? Why was that?"
"Well, women aren't interested hi exploring and things like that."
"You didn't happen to discuss the caves with Mrs. Douglas at any time, did you?"
"No, sir. Only with Mr. Douglas."
«And what did you tell him?"
"Well, I remember telling him that the caves could be dangerous."
"Was anything said about a guide?"
The clerk nodded. "Yes, I'm sure I suggested that he use a guide. I recommend one to all our guests."
"No more questions. Your witness, Mr. Chotas."

"How long have you been in the hotel business, Mr. Mousson?"
"Over twenty years."
"And before that you were a psychiatrist?"
"Me? No, sir."
"A psychologist perhaps?"
"No, sir."
"Oh. Then you're not an expert on the behavior of women?"
"Well, I may not be a psychiatrist, but in the hotel business you learn a lot about women."
''Do you know who Osa Johnson is?"
"Osa--?No."
"She's a world famous explorer. Have you ever heard of Amelia Earhart?"
"No, sir."
"Margaret Mead?"
"No, sir."
"Are you married, Mr. Mousson?"
"Not now. But I've been married three times, so I am something of an expert on women."
"On the contrary, Mr. Mousson. I suggest that if you were really an expert on women, you would have been, able to handle one marriage. No farther questions."

"Your name, please?"
"Christopher Cocyannis."
"Would you tell us your occupation?"
"I am a guide at the Caves of Perama."
"How long have you been a guide there?"
'Ten years."
"Is business good?"
"Very good. Thousands of tourists come to see the caves every year."
"Would you please look at the man sitting over in

that box. Have you ever seen Mr. Douglas before?"
"Yes, sir. He came to the caves in August."
"Are you sure?"
"Positive."
"Well now, I'm sure that puzzles all of us, Mr. Cocyannis. Out of all the thousands of people who come to the caves, you can remember one individual?"
"I'm not likely to forget him."
"Why is that, Mr. Cocyannis?"
"First of all he wouldn't take a guide."
"Do all of your visitors take guides?"
"The Germans and the French are too stingy, but all the Americans do."
Laughter.
"I see. Was there any other reason you remembered Mr. Douglas?"
"You bet there was. I wouldn't have noticed him especially except for the guide thing, and the woman with him seemed kind of embarrassed when he said no. Then about an hour later, I saw him hurry out of the entrance, and he was alone and he seemed awfully upset, and I thought maybe the woman had had an accident or something. I went up to him and asked if the lady was all right and he stared at me kind of funny and said, 'What lady?' and I said, "The lady you took in the caves with you.' And he turned kind of white and I thought he was going to hit me. Then he started yelling, I've lost her. I need help,' and he began carrying on like a crazy man."
"But he didn't call for help until you asked where the missing woman was?"
"That's right."
"What happened next?"
"Well, I organized the other guides and we began a search. Some damned fool had moved the Danger sign from the new section. That's not open to the public. That's where we finally found her about three hours later. She was in pretty bad shape."
"One last question. And answer this very carefully. When Mr. Douglas first came out of the cave, was he looking around for someone to help him, or did you get the impression that he was leaving?"
"He was leaving."
'Tour witness."

Napoleon Chptas' voice was very gentle.
"Mr. Cocyannis, are you a psychiatrist?"
"No, sir. I'm a guide."
"And you're not psychic?"
"No, sir."
"I ask this because over the past week, we've had hotel clerks who are experts on human psychology, eyewitnesses who are nearsighted, and now you tell us

that you can look at a man who attracted your attention
because he seemed agitated, and you can read his
mind. How did you know he wasn't looking for help
when you went up and spoke to him?"
"He didn't look like it."
"And you can remember his behavior that well?"
"That's right."
"You obviously have a remarkable memory. I "«rant
you to look around the courtroom. Have you ever seen
anyone in this room before today?"
"The defendant."
"Yes. Aside from him? Take your time."
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«No."
a > ''If you had, you would have remembered?"
' "Absolutely."
"Have you ever seen me before today?"
"No, sir."
"Would you look at this piece of paper, please. Can him tell me what it is?"
\ "It's a ticket."
I To what?"
"The Caves of Perama."
"And the date on it?"
"Monday. Three weeks ago."
"Yes. That ticket was purchased and used by me,
a. Cocyannis. There were five others in my party, you were our guide. No further questions."

"What is your occupation?"
"I'm a bellboy at the Palace Hotel hi loannina."
"Would you please look at the defendant seated In
be defendant's box. Have you ever seen her before?"
"Yes, sir. In movies."
"Did you ever see her hi person before today?"
"Yes, sir. She came into the hotel and asked me
iiat room Mr. Douglas was staying in. I told her she'd have to inquire at the desk and she said she preferred
to bother them, so I gave her the number of his
agalow."
"And this was when?"
"The first day of August. The day of the melterrd." "And are you sure that this is the same woman?"
"How could I forget her? She tipped me two hun-1
drachmas."

The trial was going into its fourth week. Everyone
that Napoleon Chotas was conducting the best
a ense they had ever witnessed. But in spite of this the
' » of guilt was being woven tighter and tighter.
Peter Demonides was building up a picture of two
desperate to be together, to be married, with

only Catherine Douglas standing in their way. Slowly day by day, Demonides elaborated on the plot to murder her.

Larry Douglas' attorney, Frederick Stavros, had gladly abdicated his position and relied on Napoleon Chotas. But now even Stavros began to feel that it would take a miracle to get an acquittal. Stavros stared at the empty chair hi the packed courtroom and wondered if Constantin Demiris was really going to make an appearance. If Noelle Page was convicted, the Greek tycoon would probably not come, for it would mean that he had been defeated. On the other hand, if the tycoon knew there would be an acquittal, he would probably show up. The empty chair was becoming a symbol of which way the trial would go.

The seat remained empty.

It was on a Friday afternoon that the case finally exploded.

"Would you state your name, please?"

"Doctor Kazomides. John Kazomides."

"Did you ever meet Mr. or Mrs. Douglas, Doctor?"

"Yes, sir. Both of them."

"What was the occasion?"

"I got a call to come to the Caves of Perama, A woman had been lost in there, and when the search party finally found her, she was in a state of shock."

"Had she been hurt physically?"

"Yes. There were multiple contusions. Her hands and arms and cheeks had been badly scraped on the rocks. She had fallen down and hit her head, and I diagnosed a probable concussion. I immediately gave her a shot of morphine for the pain and ordered them to take her to the local hospital."

"And is that where she went?"

"No, sir."

"Would you tell the jury why not?"

"At her husband's insistence she was taken back to their bungalow at the Palace Hotel."

"Did that strike you as peculiar, Doctor?"
"He said he wanted to look after her himself.*'
"So Mrs. Douglas was taken back to her hotel. Did you accompany her there?"
"Yes. I insisted on going back to her bungalow with her. I wanted to be at her bedside when she awakened."
"And were you there when she awakened?"
"Yes, sir."
"Did Mrs. Douglas say anything to you?"
«She did."
"Would you tell the Court what she said."
"She told me that her husband had tried to murder her."
It was a full five minutes before they could quiet the uproar in the courtroom, and it was not until the President threatened to clear the room that the hubbub finally subsided. Napoleon Chotas had walked over to the defendant's box and was holding a hurried conference with Noelle Page. For the first time she seemed upset. Demonides was going on with the questioning.
"Doctor, you said in your testimony that Mrs. Douglas was in shock. In your professional opinion was she lucid when she told you that her husband tried to murder her?"
"Yes, sir. I had already given her one sedative at the caves, and she was relatively calm. However when I told her I was going to give her another sedative, she became extremely agitated and begged me not to."
The President of the Court leaned down and asked, "Did she explain why?"
"Yes, Your Honor. She said that her husband would kill her while she was asleep."
The President leaned back in his chair thoughtfully and said to Peter Demonides, "You may continue."
"Dr. Kazomides, did yon hi fact administer a second sedative to Mrs. Douglas?"
"Yes."
"While she was in her bed at the bungalow?"
"Yes."
"How did you administer it?"
"By hypodermic. In the hip."
"And she was asleep when you left?"
"Yes."
"Was there any chance Mrs. Douglas could have awakened any time in the next few hours, gotten out of bed without assistance, dressed herself and walked out

of that house unaided?"
"In her condition? No. It would be most unlikely. She was very heavily sedated."
"That is all, thank you, Doctor."
The jurors were staring at Noelle Page and Larry Douglas and their faces had turned cold and unfriendly. A stranger could have walked into that courtroom and known instantly how the case was going.
Bill Fraser's eyes were bright with satisfaction. After Dr. Kazomides' testimony there could no longer be the slightest doubt that Catherine had been murdered by Larry Douglas and Noelle Page. There was nothing Napoleon Chotas would be able to do to eradicate from the minds of the jurors the image of a terrified woman, drugged and defenseless, begging not to be left in the hands of her murderer.
Frederick Stavros was in a panic. He had gladly let Napoleon Chotas run the show, following his lead in blind faith, confident that Chotas would be able to secure an acquittal for his client and therefore for Stavros' client. Now he felt betrayed. Everything was falling apart. The doctor's testimony had been irreparably damaging, both for its evidential and its emotional impact. Stavros looked around the room. Except for the one mysteriously reserved seat the room was filled. The world press was here, waiting to report what happened next
Stavros had a momentary vision of himself leaping to his feet, confronting the doctor and brilliantly tearing his testimony to shreds. His client would be acquitted and he, Stavros, would be a hero. He kqew this would be his last chance. The outcome of this case would mean the difference between fame and obscurity. Stavros could actually feel his thigh muscles bunching up, urging him to get to his feet. But he could not move. He sat there, paralyzed by the overpowering specter of failure. He turned to look at Choas. The deep, sad eyes in the bloodhound face were studying the doctor on the witness stand, as though trying to come to some decision.
Slowly Napoleon Chotas rose to his feet. But instead of walking over to the witness, he moved toward the bench and quietly addressed the judges.
"Mr. President, Your Honors, I do not wish to cross-examine the witness. With the Court's permission, I would like to ask for a recess in order to confer in camera with the Court and the Prosecuting Attorney."
The President of the Court turned to the Prosecutor.
"Mr. Demonides?"
"No objection," Demonides said, his voice wary.
The Court was recessed. Not one person moved from his chair.

Thirty minutes later Napoleon Chotas returned to the courtroom alone. The instant he walked through the chamber door, everyone in the courtroom sensed that something important had taken place. There was an air of secret self-satisfaction in the lawyer's face, his walk was faster and springier, as though some charade had ended and it was no longer necessary to play games. Chotas walked over to the defendant's box and stared down at Noelle. She looked up into his face, her violet eyes probing, anxious. And suddenly a smile touched the lawyer's lips, and from the light in his eyes Noelle knew that somehow he had done it, he had performed the miracle in spite of all the evidence, in spite of all the odds. Justice had triumphed, but it was the Justice of Constantin Demiris. Larry Douglas was staring at Chotas, too, filled with fear and with hope.

Whatever Chotas had done would have been for Noelle. But what about him?

Chotas addressed Noelle in a carefully neutral voice. "The President of the Court has given me permission to speak with you in his chambers." He turned to Frederick Stavros, who was sitting in all agony of uncertainty, not knowing what was going on. "You and your client have permission to join us if you wish."

Stavros nodded. "Of course." He scrambled to his feet, almost knocking over his chair in his eagerness.

Two bailiffs accompanied them to the empty chambers of the President. When the bailiffs had left and they were alone, Chotas turned to Frederick Stavros. "What I am about to say," he said quietly, "is for the benefit of my client. However, because they are coefendants, I have been able to arrange for your client to be accorded the same privilege as mine."

"Tell me!" Noelle demanded.

Chotas turned to her. He spoke slowly, choosing his words with great care. "I have just had a conference with the judges," he said. "They were impressed with the case the prosecution has made against you, However --" he paused, delicately, "I was able to--er-- persuade them that the interests of justice would not be served by punishing you."

"What's going to happen?" Stavros demanded hi a fever of impatience.

There was a note of d<?ep satisfaction in Chotas* voice as he continued, "If the defendants are willing to change their pleas to guilty, the judges have agreed to give each of them a five-year sentence." He smiled and added, "Four years of which will be suspended. In re*

alfty they will not have to serve more than six months."
He turned to Larry. "Because you are an American,
Mr. Douglas, you will be deported. You will never be
permitted to return to Greece."
Larry nodded, his body flooding with relief,
Chotas turned back to Noelle. "This was not an easy
thing to accomplish. I must tell you in all honesty that
the primary reason for the leniency of the Court is the
interest of your--er--patron. They feel he has already
suffered unduly because of all this publicity, and they
are anxious to see it ended."
"I understand," Noelle said.
Napoleon Chotas hesitated in embarrassment.
"There is one more condition."
She looked at him. "Yes?"
"Your passport win be taken away. You will never
be permitted to leave Greece. You will remain here under
the protection of your friend."
So it had been done.
Constantin Demiris had kept his bargain. Noelle did
not for a moment believe that the judges were being
lenient because they were concerned about Demiris'
being subjected to unpleasant publicity. No, he had
had to pay a price for her freedom, and Noelle knew
that it must have been a heavy one. But in return De-tniris
was getting her back and arranging it so that she
could never leave him. Or see Larry again. She turned
to Larry and read the relief in his face. He was going
to be set free, and that was all he cared about. There
was no regret about losing her and about what had
happened. But Noelle understood it because she understood
Larry, for he was her alter ego, her DoppelgOnger, and they both had the same reckless
zest for life, the same insatiable appetites. They were
kindred spirits beyond mortality, beyond laws they had
never made and never lived by. In her way Noelle
would miss Larry very much, and when he left, a part
of her would go with him. But she knew now how precious
her life was to her and how terrified she had been
of losing it. And so on balance it was a very good bargain,
and she accepted it gratefully. She turned to Chotas
and said, "That is satisfactory."
Chotas looked at her, and there was a sadness in his
eyes as well as the satisfaction. Noelle understood that,
too. He was in love with her and had had to use all his
skill to save her for another man. Noelle had deliber- heavily encouraged
Chotas to tall in love ^ ^ .
cause she needed him, needed to make er^hm had
would stop at nothing to save her. Ana ct
worked out. »» Frederick
"I think it's absolutely marvelous».
Stavros was babbling. "Absolutely marvel<lie nearly as
In truth Stavros felt that it was a awl* ^ *_

good as an acquittal, and while it was tr» ^^ ^
leon Chotas would reap most of the ^n»0 prom this
peripheral fallout would still be trenwodjj' of ^
moment on Stavros would have his cn° ^ ^^ ^ ^
and each time he told the story of the tníW'
would get bigger and bigger. y^ «<Th
"It sounds like a good deal," La*^ kill Gather-only
thing is, we're not guilty. We didn't *"* *""'*

Frederick Stavros turned on him in *or not?), ^
gives a damn whether you're guilty j.je „ jjg shouted. "We're making you a
present of > had ^^
shot a quick glance at Chotas to see 11 » .. attitUJe to the "we" but the
lawyer was listening
one of aloof neutrality. ij tn ctavrn«5
"I want you to understand,"; CW«>J*£»^ "that I am only advising my cuent
i»1**
to make his own decision." without this
"What would have happened to U8
deal?" Larry asked. .. ctavros began.
"The jury would have-" FredenckS » fat*.
"I want to hear it from him," La^ ^161™?160»
curtly. He turned to Chotas. ..-.h ««*»,. mn«t
«In a trial, Mr. Douglas," Chotas *ffi*Sf£. important factor is not innocence
or g»^ flo a{j,jOjute pression of innocence or guilt. There ^^ favour ^
truth, there is only the interpretation ago ^^^ of case it does not matter
whether you » «^ ^at .g murder, the jury has the impression ago ^ ^ ^ what you
would have been convicted
end you would have been just as dead.
--^*fc™#Ai-The

Larry looked at him for a long moment, then nodded.
"OK," he said. "Let's get it over with."

Fifteen minutes later the two defendants stood before
the judges' bench. The President of the Court was
seated in the center, flanked by the two justices. Napoleon
Chotas stood next to Noelle Page and Frederick
Stavros stood at the side of Larry Douglas. The courtroom
was charged with an electric tension, for word
had flashed about the room that a dramatic development
was about to take place. But when it came, ft
caught everyone completely off guard. In a formal,
pedantic voice, as though he bad not just made a secret
bargain with the three jurists on the bench, Napoleon
Chotas said, "Mr. President, Your Honors, my client
wishes to change her plea from not guilty to guilty."
The President of the Court leaned back in his chair
and stared at Chotas in surprise, as though he were
hearing the news for the first time.
He's playing it to the hilt, Noelle thought. He wants
to earn his money, or whatever it is Demirls is paying

him off with.
The President leaned forward and consulted with the other justices in a flurry of whispers. They nodded and the President looked down at Noelle and said, "Do you wish to change your plea to guilty?"
Noelle nodded and said firmly, "I do."
Frederick Stavrds spoke up quickly, as though afraid of being left out of the procedure. "Your Honors, my Client wishes to change his plea from not guilty to guilty."
The President turned to regard Larry. "Do you wish to change your plea to guilty?"
Larry glanced at Chotas and then nodded. "Yes."
The President studied the two prisoners, his face grave. "Have your attorneys advised you that under Greek law the penalty for the crime of premeditated ; murder is execution?"

"Yes» Your Honor." NoeUe's voice was strong and clear.

The President turned to look at Larry.

"Yes, sir," he said.

There was another whispered consultation among the judges. The President of the Court turned to Demonides. "Does the Prosecutor for the State have any objections to the change of plea?"

Demonides looked at Chotas a long moment, then said, "None."

Noelle wondered if he were in on the payoff also, or whether he was simply being used as a pawn.

''Very well," the President said. "This Court has no choice but to accept the change of plea." He turned to the jury. "Gentlemen, in view of this new development, you are herewith released from your duties as jurymen. In effect the trial has come to an end. The Court will pass sentence. Thank you for your services and for your cooperation. The Court will recess, for two hours."

In the next moment the reporters began to tumble out of the room, racing to their telephones and teletype machines to report the latest sensational development in the murder trial of Noelle Page and Larry Douglas. '

Two hours later the courtroom was packed to overflowing as the Court was reconvened. Noelle glanced around the courtroom at the faces of the spectators. They were watching her with expressions of eager expectation, and it was all Noelle could do to keep from laughing aloud at their naivete. These were the cqmon people, the masses, and they really believed that justice was meted out fairly, that under a democracy aty men were created equal, that a poor man had the same rights and privileges as a rich man.

"Wjll the defendants now rise and approach the bench?"

Gracefully Noelle rose to her feet and moved toward

the bench, Chotas at her side. Out of the comer of her eye she saw Larry and Stavros stepping forward.

The President of the Court spoke. "This has been a long and difficult trial," be began. "In capital cases where there is a reasonable doubt of guilt, the Court is always inclined to let the accused have the benefit of the doubt I must admit that in this case we felt that there existed such a doubt. The fact that the State was unable to produce a corpus delicti was a very strong point in favor of the defendants." He turned to look at Napoleon Chotas. "I am sure that the able counsel for the defense is well aware that the Greek Courts have never given the death penalty in a case where a murder has not been definitely proven to have been committed.''

A faint sense of unease was beginning to brush No-efle, nothing alarming yet, just the merest whisper, the slightest hint. The President was going on.

"My colleagues and I were, for that reason, frankly surprised when the defendants decided to change their pleas to guilty, hi mid-trial."

The feeling was in the pit of Noelle's stomach now, growing, moving upward, beginning to constrict her throat, so that she was suddenly finding it difficult to breathe. Larry was staring at the judge, not fully comprehending yet what was happening.

"We appreciate the agonizing soul-searching that
must have taken place before the defendants decided to confess their guilt before this Court and before the
world. However, the easing of their consciences cannot
be accepted as atonement for the terrible crime they
have admitted committing, the cold-blooded murder of
a helpless, defenseless woman."

It was at that moment that Noelle knew, with a sudden,
mind-smashing certainty that she had been
tricked. Demiris had set up a charade to lull her into a
feeling of false security so that he could do this to her.
This was his game, this was the trap he had baited. He

had known bow terrified she was of dying, so he had
held out the hope of life to her and she had accepted it,
had believed him, and he had outwitted her. Démiris
had wanted his vengeance now, not later. Her life
could have been saved. Of course Chotas had known
that she would not get the death penalty unless a
corpse was produced. He had made no deal with the
judges. Chotas had rigged this whole defense to lure
Noelle to her death. She turned to look at him. He
looked up to meet her gaze, and his eyes were filled
with a genuine sadness. He loved her and he had murdered
her, and if he had it to do over again, he would
do the same thing, for in the end he was Demiris' man,
just as she was Demiris' woman, and neither of them
could fight his power.
The President was speaking. ". . » and so under the
powers invested in me by the State, and in accord with
its laws, I pronounce that the sentence on the two defendants,
Noelle Page and Lawrence Douglas shall be
execution by a firing squad. ... the sentence to be
carried out within ninety days from this date."
The Court was in pandemonium, but Noelle neither
heard nor saw it. Something had made her turn
around. The vacant seat was no longer empty. Constantin
Demiris sat in it. He was freshly shaved and
barbered. He was dressed in a blue raw-silk suit,
flawlessly tailored, a light bhie sliirt, and a foulard tie.
His olive black eyes were bright and alive. There was
no sign of the defeated, crumbling man who had come
to visit her in prison, because that man had never existed.
Constantin Demiris had come to watch Noelle in the
moment of her defeat, savoring the terror in her. His
black eyes were locked on hers and for one split instant
she saw in them a deep, malevolent satisfaction. And

there was something else. Regret, perhaps, but it was
gone before she could capture it, and it was all too late
now anyway.
IF"

 The chess game was finally over.

Larry had listened to the President's last words hi
shocked disbelief, and whea a bailiff stepped forward
and took him by the arm, Larry shook loose and
turned back to the bench.

"Wait a minute!" he yelled. "I didn't kill her! They
framed me!"

Another bailiff hurried forward and the two men
held Larry. One of them pulled out a pair of handcuffs.

"No!" Larry was screaming. "Listen to me! I didn't
kill her!"

He tried to jerk away from the bailiffs, but the hand*
cuffs snapped on his wrists and he was yanked away,
out of the room.

Noelle felt a pressure-on
her' arm. A matron was
waiting there, to escort her out of the courtroom.

"They're waiting for you,, Miss Page."

It was like a theater call. They're waiting for you,
Miss Page, Only this time when the curtain went down,
it would never rise again. The realization hit Noelle
that this was the last time in her life that she would
ever be in public, the last time that she would be
around other people, uncaged. This was her farewell
appearance, this dirty, dreary Greek courtroom, her final
theater. Well, she thought defiantly, at least 1 have
a good house. She looked around the packed courtroom
for the last time. She saw Armand Gautier staring
at her in stunned silence, shaken for once out of his
cynicism.

, There was Philippe Sorel, his rugged face trying
hard for an encouraging smile and not quite managing ÍL

Across the room was Israel Katz, his eyes closed and
his lips moving as though in silent prayer. Noelle
remembered the night she had smuggled him into the
trunk of the General's car, under the nose of the albino
Gestapo officer, and the fear that had been in her then.

p a *t «a as nothing to the tenor that was possessing her

D°K Jte's ^68 move^ across t"6 room and rested on a ^e <rf Auguste Lanchon, the shopkeeper. She
they Not reca^ l"8 name> b^t sn6 remembered his por t*0C and his gross squat body and the dreary hotel 01116 in Vienna. When he saw her looking at him, he JSJJJ and lowered his eyes.
a tatf» attractive, gf ay-haired American-looting man
j-jiding up staring at her as though wanting to tell was .jjething. Noelle had no idea who he was.
Thtf matron was tugging at her arm now, saying,

<Comtf ^0^ ***** ^86' * ' *"
_, ^erick Stavros was in a state of shock. He had a fliy ^een 8 ^111688 to a cold-blooded frame-up; he
Saw00 a party to it-He could ^to *e ^^**601 of
rtf r^rt and te^ Wm wnat bad happened: what Cho
C ha** P1011"86^ But would acy teHeve h™17 Would
a tft^6 l"8 ^01^ against the word of Napoleon Chofln
really didn't matter, Stavros thought bitterly. are
this ^e WOH^^ ^® fl™8*1^ as a lawyer. No one would
yt* ^111 aêam-Someone
spoke his name and he
tn e& ^ Chotas was standing 'Aere saying, "they
m,r-free
tomorrow, why don't you come and have
1 en vtfth me, Frederick? Td like you to meet my

itni*8-*
^1 y°u ^ave a ver^ Prom^sul8 future." P8^?^ Chotas' shoulder, Frederick Stavros could see
. pyesident of the Court exiting through the door fat jed to his private chambers. Now would be the
TT (ago talk to him, to explain what had happened, «jfvr** turned back to Napoleon Chotas, his mind still
filled ^1 *e ^orror °* what this man had done, and ÍTiheírá nimse^ saying»
"That's very kind of you, sir.
^j^ould be a convenient time . , . ?"

^. Greek law executions take place on the little !»
A<& Ageana, art hour out of the port of Piraeus. A
ifll government boat transports condemned prison Jt^SH^l

ers to the island. A series of small gray cliffs leads to the harbor itself and high on a hill is a lighthouse built on an outcropping of rock. The prison on Ageana is on the north side of the island, out of sight of the little harbor where excursion boats regularly disgorge excited tourists for an hour or two of shopping and sightseeing before sailing on to the next island. The prison is not on the sightseeing schedule, and no one approaches it except on official business.

It was 4:00 and. on a Saturday morning. Noelle's execution was scheduled to take place at 6:00 and. They had brought Noelle her favorite dress to wear, a wine-red, brushed-wool Dior, and matching red suede shoes. She had all new silk handstitched lingerie and a white jabot of Venetian lace for her throat. Constantin Demiris had sent Noelle's regular hairdresser to do her hair. It was as though Noelle were preparing to go to a party.

Intellectually Noelle knew that there would be no last-minute reprieve, that in a little while her body was going to be brutally violated and her blood spilled upon the ground. And yet emotionally she could not keep from hoping that Constantin Demiris would make a miracle and spare her life. It would not even have to be a miracle--it only needed a phone call, a word, a wave of his golden hand. If he spared her now, she would make it up to him. She would do anything. If she could only see him, she would tell him she would never look at another man, that she would devote herself to making him happy for the rest of his life. But she knew that it would do no good to beg. If Demiris came to her, yes. If she had to go to him, no.

There were still two hours.

Larry Douglas was in another part of the prison. Since his conviction, his mail had increased tenfold. Letters poured in from women in all parts of the world, and the warden, who considered himself a sopbisti-

cated man, was shocked by some of them.

Larry Douglas would probably have enjoyed them if he had known of them. But he was hi a drugged world of half-twilight where nothing touched him. During his first few days on the island, he had been in a state of violence, screaming day and night that he was innocent and demanding a new trial. The prison doctor had finally ordered that he be kept on tranquilizers.

At ten minutes before five and., when the prison warden and four guards came to Larry Douglas' cell,

he was seated on his bunk, quiet and withdrawn. The warden had to speak his name twice before Larry was aware that they had come for him. He rose to his feet, his movements dreamlike and lethargic.

The warden led him out to the corridor, and they walked in a slow procession toward a guarded door at the far end of the corridor. As they reached the door, the guard opened it and they were outside in a walled courtyard. The predawn air was chilly and Larry shivered as he stepped through the door. There was a full moon in the sky and bright stars. It reminded him of the mornings in the South Pacific islands when the pilots left their warm bunks and gathered under the chilly stars for a last minute briefing before takeoff. He could hear the sound of the sea in the distance, and he tried to remember which island he was on and what his mission was. Some men led him to a post in front of a wall and tied his arms behind his back.

There was no anger in him now, only a kind of drowsy wonder about the way the briefing was being handled. He was filled with a deep lassitude but he knew he must not fall asleep because he had to lead the mission. He raised his head and saw men in uniform lined up. They were aiming guns at him. Old, buried instincts began to take over. They would attack from different directions and try to separate him from the rest of his squadron because they were afraid of him. He saw a movement at three o'clock low and knew they were coming for him. They would expect

him to bank out of range, but instead he shoved the stick all the way forward and went into an outside loop that nearly tore the wings off his plane. He pulled out at the bottom of the dive and executed a snap roll to the left. There was no sign of them. He had outmaneuered them. He began to climb, and below him he saw a Zero. He laughed aloud and gave his plane right stick and rudder until the Zero was centered in his gunsights. Then he swooped down like an avenging angel, closing the distance with dizzying speed. His finger began to tighten on the trigger button when a sudden excruciating pain smashed through his body. And another. And another. He could feel his flesh tearing and his guts spilling out, and he thought, Oh, my God, where did he come from? . . . There's a better pilot than me ... 1 wonder who he is . . .

And then he began spinning abruptly into space and everything grew dark and silent

In her cell Noelle's hair was being coifed when she
heard a volley of thunder outside.
"Is it going to rain?" she asked.
The hairdresser looked at her strangely for a moment
and saw that she really did not know what the
sound was, "No," she said quietly, "it is going to be a
beautiful day."
And then Noelle knew.
And she was next

At five-thirty and., thirty minutes before her execution
was scheduled, Noelle heard footsteps approaching
her cell. Her heart gave an involuntary leap.
She had been sure that Constantin Demiris would want
to see her. She knew that she had never looked more
beautiful, and perhaps when he saw her . . . perhaps
. . . The prison warden appeared, accompanied by a
guard and a nurse carrying a black medical bag. Noelle
looked behind them for Demiris. The corridor was
empty. The guard opened the cell door, and the

warden and nurse entered. Noelle a*
was pounding, the wave of fear b»\
again, drowning out the faint hotJvnd ring- ^Jtafc to W/
"It isn't time yet, is it?' Noeife » Vt h,^ «7
3Í1 /
? ?k Wrwant
The warden looked uncoinfort^
The nurse is here to give you an
She looked at him, not unde
an enema."
He looked even more uitcomt ^fr *1 jJ ? saveyou being--embarrassed." V ° a
And then Noelle understood. ^We, «» / turned
into a roaring agony, tearing at \\ /Jne nod~
ded her head and the warden toI vd b.%» * iftne ^'
The guard locked the door and ÍK storHacK fi down the corridor out of
sight. \Vl atjj , l|//
"We don't wait to spoil that a> ^»1% w2f>e nuree was cooing. "Why don't we
just V I you He
down right there? This will Only tATO dïess „ a
The nurse began to work ov? it 0«' M/f&e felt
nothing. '?ai»iniil!/
She was with her father &nd v her, ^'"1J Look at
her, a stranger could tell she w\ lP°d' ^
people were fighting to pick heX grow» Sav1n pounds ns and
hold her. A priest was in THA of »3f a he said,
"Would you like to make your \ V in THA asked G°&> my child?" but she shook
her head i\ ro°Tn asked ^ause her father was talkii^ and she Wanu^^sgj *"/,4t he
was
saying. You wen born a P>ince^patie,J: J'pur kingdom.

When yot grow up, yo?^ to hear J/ marryl a handsome prince and live in a gt^
and thi .]
She was walling down a lo^V^ »oín» <//** ^^ men and someone opened a da*»á
p«^ a outside
in a cold courtyaxi. Her father \^g ^rrfcw W °Pto 8 window and she could see
the \? ann ^ÁMp* bobbing
on the water. V\as ^?* W
The men led ker to a post in ^11 «CS 'A and a ^
tened her hands behind hfer an fjst to the
post and her father said, pounds <> yA ^rotit ago» Jf^St '^*l*

\^^l ^***»'

cess? That's your fleet. One day they'll carry you to all
the magic places in the world. And he held her close
and she felt safe. She could not remember why, but he
had been angry with her, but now everything was all
right, and he loved her again, and she turned to him
but his face was a blur, and she could not recall what
he looked like. She could not remember her father's
face.
She was filled with an overwhelming sadness, as
though she had lost something precious, and she knew
that she had to remember him or she would die, and
she began to concentrate very hard, but before she
could see it, there was a sudden roaring sound and a
thousand knives of agony tore into her flesh and her 458

warden and nurse entered. Noelle found that her heart
was pounding, the wave of fear beginning to lap at her
again, drowning out the faint hope that had been stirring.
"It isn't time yet, is it?" Noelle asked.
The warden looked uncomfortable. "No, "Miss Page.
The nurse is here to give you an enema."
She looked at him, not understanding. "I don't want
an enema."
He looked even more uncomfortable. "It will save
you being--embarrassed."
And then Noelle understood. And her fear turned
into a roaring agony, tearing at her stomach. She nodded
her head and the warden turned and left the cell.
The guard locked the door and tactfully walked down
the corridor out of sight.
"We don't want to spoil that pretty dress," the nurse
was cooing. "Why don't we just slip it off and you lie
down right there? This will only take a minute."
The nurse began to work on her, 1>ut Noelle felt

nothing.
She was with her father and he was saying, Look at her, a stranger could tell she was of royal blood, and people were fighting to pick her up in their arms and hold her. A priest was in the room and he said, "Would you like to make your confession to God, my child?" but she shook her head impatiently because her father was talking and she wanted to hear what he was saying. You were born a princess and this is your kingdom. When you grow up, you're going to marry a handsome prince and live in a grand palace.
She was walking down a long corridor with some men and someone opened a door and she was outside in a cold courtyard. Her father was holding her up to a window and she could see the tall masts of ships bobbing on the water.
The men led her to a post in front of a wall and fastened her hands behind her and tied her waist to the post and her father said, Do you see those ships, Prtn- V1

cess? That's your fleet. One day they'll carry you to aH the magic places in the world. And he held her close and she felt safe. She could not remember why, but he had been angry with her, but now everything was all right, and he loved her again, and she turned to him
but his face was a blur, and she could not recall what he looked like. She could not remember her father's face.
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EPILOGIIB

The man and woman moved through the cemetery, their faces dappled by the shadows of the tall, graceful expresses that lined the path. They walked slowly in the shimmering heat of the noonday sun.

Sister Theresa said, "I wish to tell you again how grateful we are for your generosity. I do not know what we would have done without you."

Constantin Demiris waved a deprecating hand. "Arkayto," he said. "It is nothing, Sister."

But Sister Theresa knew that without this savior the nunnery would have had to close down years ago. And surely it was a sign from Heaven that now she had been able to repay him in some measure. It was a thrimvos, a triumph. She thanked Saint Dionysius again that the Sisters had been permitted to rescue the American-friend of Demiris' from the waters of the lake on that terrible night of the storm. True, something had happened to the woman's mind and she was like a child, but she would be cared for. Mr. Demiris had asked Sister Theresa to keep the woman here within these walls, sheltered and protected from the outside world for the rest of her life. He was such a good and kind man.

They had reached the end of the cemetery. A path wound down to a promontory where the woman stood, staring out at the calm, emerald lake below.

"There she is," Sister Theresa said. "I will leave you now. Hayretay"

Demiris watched Sister Theresa start back toward

the nunnery, then he walked down the path to where the woman stood.

"Good morning," he said, gently.

She turned around slowly and looked at him. Her eyes were dull and vacant and there was no recognition on her face.

"I brought you something," Constantin Demiris said.

He pulled a small jewelry box out of his pocket and held it out to her. She stared at it like a small child.

"Go on, take it."

Slowly she reached out and took the box. She lifted the lid, and inside, nested in cotton, was a miniature, exquisitely made gold bird with ruby eyes and outstretched wings poised for flight. Demiris watched as the child-woman removed it from the box and held it up. The bright sun caught the gleam of its gold and the sparkle of its ruby eyes and sent tiny rainbows flashing

through the air. She turned it from side to side, watching the lights dancing around her head.

"I will not be seeing you again," Demiris said, "but you won't have to worry. No one will harm you now. The wicked people are dead."

As he spoke, her face happened to be turned toward him, and for one frozen instant hi time it seemed to him that a gleam of intelligence, a look of joy came into her eyes, but a moment later it was gone and there was only the vacant, mindless stare. It could have been an illusion, a trick of the sunlight reflecting the sparkle of the golden bird across her eyes.

He thought about it as he walked slowly up the hitt and out the huge stone gate of the nunnery to where his limousine was waiting to drive him back to Athens.

Chicago

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